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Cover: Photo by Charles F. Lummis, March 20, 1904, of his home, "El Alisal," under construction. For the past half-century, the Historical Society of Southern California has been housed here. *Historical Society of Southern California Collection*.

HOW NOT TO ARM A STATE:

American Guns and the Crisis of Governance in Mexico, Nineteenth and Twenty-First Centuries

By Brian DeLay

PRESENTED AS THE TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL
W. P. WHITSETT LECTURE AT CALIFORNIA STATE
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ABSTRACT: Today's "Iron River of Guns" flowing from the United States into Mexico has a long backstory. From Mexico's independence movement in the early nineteenth century through its early twentieth-century revolution, the international arms trade in general and arms transfers from the U.S. in particular have often confounded the project of national governance. The vagaries of global arms markets, the dangers of arming the state on credit, the difficulties of maintaining government arsenals, and the misfortune of sharing land borders with major arms producers all shaped Mexico's first independent century in surprising and neglected ways. This history offers a fresh perspective on the contemporary crisis and the policy debate surrounding it.

Keywords: arms traffic; Mexico's drug cartels; Mexico's sovereignty; revolution in Mexico

"Desde aquí, desde Ciudad Juárez, en la frontera de México con Estados Unidos, decimos: No más armas. No más armas hacia México. No more weapons!"

—Mexican President Felipe Calderón, Feb. 16, 2012¹

That last sentence in English was obviously meant for American consumption, and President Calderón came with a prop to emphasize it. Standing on a podium in Ciudad Juárez, savage heartland of Mexico's drug-war violence, Calderón unveiled a new billboard. Suspended on a groaning steel lattice, three tons of confiscated guns had been melted and hammered together to spell out the message "NO MORE WEAPONS!" It was a stylish way to acknowledge weakness. There is only one legal gun store in the whole of Mexico, and the army decides who can shop there. Yet Mexico is awash in guns. In the spring of 2009 the Mexican government claimed that it possessed more than 300,000 confiscated firearms, and invited the Associate Press to tour one of the "cavernous," tightly guarded warehouses where they are stored.² Specialists disagree about what percentage originates in the United States, but few doubt that this percentage is large. The flow of weapons from gun stores and gun shows in the U.S. to Mexico has been labeled the "Iron River of Guns," an apt metaphor for a commodity flow that the Mexican state cannot dam up.

This Iron River has equipped several cartel paramilitaries that are fighting one another and fighting the Mexican army and security forces in a complex war. This conflict is very dangerous to report on, and consequently very difficult to understand. Calderón declared war on the cartels soon after taking office in late 2006, and Mexico's murder rate began to soar. Six years later, Mexico City's *Reforma* newspaper reported that slightly more than 100,000 Mexicans had been murdered by the end of Calderón's presidency, and that perhaps half of these people died as a consequence of drug-related violence.³ For several years, the war turned Juárez into one of the two or three

1. "From here, from Ciudad Juárez, on the border of Mexico with the United States, we say: No more weapons. No more weapons to Mexico." For Calderón's speech, see "Exigencia de Calderón a Estados Unidos," *El Mexicano*, Feb. 17, 2012. <http://www.oem.com.mx/elmexicano/notas/n2432570.htm>, accessed December 5, 2012.

2. "Mexico Cartel Weapons Cache Stymies Tracing," *Associated Press*, May 6, 2009.

3. "Registra sexenio más de 100 mil asesinatos," *REFORMA*, November 27, 2012. http://diario.mx/Nacional/2012-11-27_74b66357/registra-sexenio-mas-de-100-mil-asesinatos/. See also Charles



Mexican President Felipe Calderón in Ciudad Juárez, backed by a sign created from three tons of confiscated guns and aimed, in English, at the United States, calling for “No More Weapons!” February 16, 2012. *Associated Press Photo*

120216060364.

most dangerous cities in the world, and it cast a hard light on the many shortcomings of the Mexican state. Indeed, in the immense profusion of English-language newspaper stories, op-eds, magazine articles, and blog posts that have appeared about the war, one finds recurring speculation about whether Mexico might become a “failed state.”

The least surprising thing a historian can do when confronted with a vexing contemporary problem is to insist that it’s nothing new. With apologies to readers looking for surprises: Mexico’s vexing problem with guns and governance is nothing new. The nineteenth century isn’t the twenty-first, and facile historical analogies obscure more than they illuminate. But insofar as arms flows have figured prominently into the destabilizing tragedy of Mexico’s drug war, it’s worth inquiring into the deeper history of guns and governance in that country.

And a deep history it is. The international arms trade in general and arms flows from the U.S. in particular injected tremendous

Bowden and Molly Molloy, “Mexicans Pay in Blood for America’s War on Drugs,” *Phoenix New Times News*, July 26, 2012.

instability into Mexico throughout the nineteenth century, much like today. Though historians have only ever studied it episodically, when viewed over the long term the arms trade emerges as a necessary, if insufficient, factor shaping first-order events in Mexican history. Again and again, the shifting architects of Mexico's national project found their plans dependent upon, deformed, or demolished by arms flows from the U.S. The state's custodians consistently found that they had too few guns and that their various rivals had too many. In this sense, nineteenth-century Mexico offers a number of "lessons" in how *not* to arm a state: things Mexico could have done little to avoid but that badly aggravated its notorious travails. I'll share four.

* * *

Lesson #1: Don't begin a revolution in a tight arms market. The American independence movement started during a relatively tranquil moment in Europe's history and was amply supplied with guns and ammunition from its inception by the Dutch, the Spanish, and especially the French.⁴ In contrast, New Spain's independence movement (1810–1821) erupted in the midst of a European bloodbath. The huge majority of the world's guns were still produced in Western Europe's craft shops in 1810, and nearly all of these shops were madly shoveling everything they made into the bottomless pit of the Napoleonic Wars. Millions of men fought in these wars, which made serious exports from Europe totally out of the question during the independence movement's critical early years.⁵

That left the United States itself as the arsenal of last resort. But the US government refused to provide Mexico with serious direct assistance, and time and again rebel agents found themselves outmaneuvered in the arms markets of America's largest cities. Like most other insurgents around the hemisphere at the time, Mexico's were cash-poor and sought to arm themselves not with silver or gold but

4. The outfitting of the American Revolution is one of the few well-studied episodes in the broader history of the arms trade in the western hemisphere. See, for example, Helen Augur, *The Secret War of Independence* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1955); Jonathan R. Dull, *The French Navy and American Independence: A Study of Arms and Diplomacy, 1774–1787* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); and Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 43–74.

5. For scale, see Charles J. Esdaile, *Napoleon's Wars: An International History, 1803–1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 1–14. Even after the war, Britain, the top European producer, would formally prohibit arms sales to Spanish American rebels until 1823. Elton Atwater, *American Regulation of Arms Exports* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1941), 294–295.

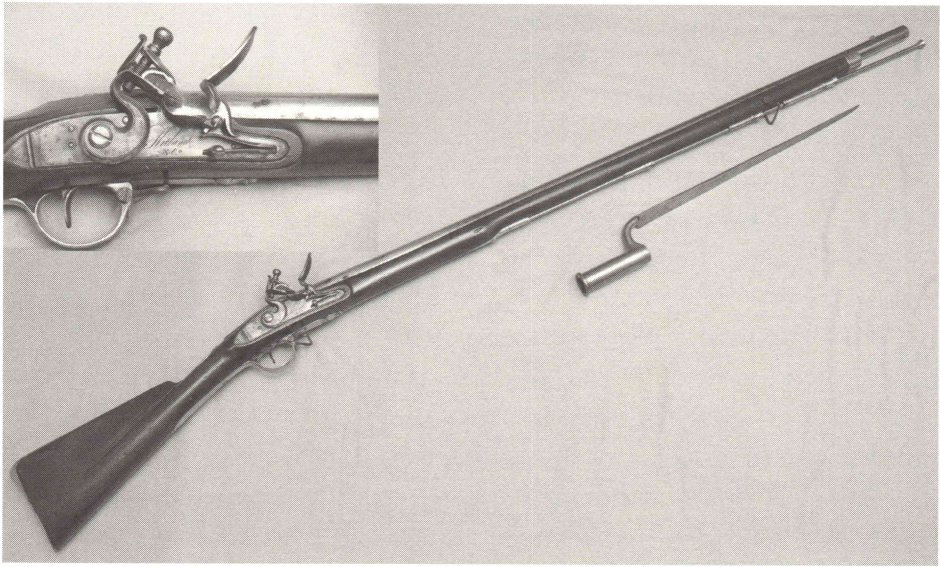
with promises—promises about what they'd do with things like mining concessions, tariff revenues, commercial policies, and government contracts when (that is to say, *if*) they managed to seize power. Because insurgents came looking not just for guns but also for the money with which to buy them, and because if successful their project would have had such far-reaching geopolitical implications, their schemes inevitably became entangled in thick webs of intrigue. These webs linked manufacturers, merchants, financiers, shipping concerns, politicians, diplomats, and assorted hustlers alert to opportunities. Such complex deals proved exceedingly difficult to put together and relatively easy for rivals—including Spain's energetic and savvy minister—to sabotage.⁶

So it was that gun poverty afflicted the independence movement from start to finish, from the exhilarating march of thousands of mostly unarmed Mexicans under radical priest Miguel Hidalgo in 1810, to the stubborn mobile insurgency under General Vicente Guerrero that characterized the final years of the war. All the movement's key figures would have seen something of themselves in a contemporary's comment that "many a time" he'd seen the prominent rebel leader Manuel Mier y Terán's "fine black eyes glisten with tears" when contemplating what he could do if only he'd had a mere five or six thousand muskets. Gun poverty is surely one of the most important reasons that the independence struggle lasted as long as it did, more than a decade, claiming by some estimates hundreds of thousands of lives and taking a staggering toll on the country's economy and infrastructure.⁷

* * *

6. Throughout the rebellion, US administrations expressed general sympathy but refused serious direct help for fear that it would compromise territorial negotiations with Spain (over the Floridas, in particular). For context, see James E. Lewis, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783–1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); and J. C. A. Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands: James Madison and the Spanish-American Frontier, 1776–1821* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). For laments over how Luis de Oñís frustrated arms deals sought by insurgent Francisco Xavier Mina, see William Davis Robinson, *Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution* (printed for Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, & Lepard, 1821), 261–262.

7. A knowledgeable observer in Veracruz estimated that the war had provoked nearly 800 million pesos in capital flight and inflicted more than 100 million pesos' worth of damage to the agriculture, mining, and industrial sectors of the economy. See Barbara A. Tenenbaum, *The Politics of Penury: Debts and Taxes in Mexico, 1821–1856* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1986), 13. Mexico's mining sector, so critical to the broader economy, would not regain prewar output until the 1850s.



The Brown Bess Flintlock musket was in use by the British Army from 1730 to 1835. Great Britain vastly expanded production of these arms during the Napoleonic Wars. In the 1820s many thousands would be condemned by the army and sold in bulk to independent Mexico. *Courtesy of the Museum of Technology, the Great War and WWII, Spalding, Lincolnshire, UK.*

This brings me to lesson #2: Don't try to arm a state on credit. Like their rebel predecessors, the governing elite in newly-independent Mexico needed guns but had no money. In the mid-1820s they secured two large loans from London firms and spent more than a million pesos of that money on armed boats and firearms. The guns were castoffs decommissioned by the British military after Waterloo, but there were lots of them: 5000 pairs of pistols, 14,000 carbines, and 70,000 East India pattern "Brown Bess" muskets.⁸

This was meant to be the beginning of a sustained state arming program, but it turned out to be far the largest arms deal of the century because three years after concluding the London loans,

8. On the shipment of guns, see "Instrucciones que observará el primer ayudante de Estado Mayor D. Juan Nepomuceno Almonte para la conduccion de las armas que se remiten al gobierno de la República de México por cuenta de las Sres. Barclay Herring Y Ca," London, Sept. 2, 1824, in folder 25215, expediente 143-17, Archivo Historico de la Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. For an excellent study of the loans and their context, see Richard J. Salvucci, *Politics, Markets, and Mexico's "London Debt," 1823-1887* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) (for the arms deal, see pp. 70-71). See also Tenenbaum, *Politics of Penury*, 20-22. For a classic indictment of the loans, see Joaquín Demetrio Casasús, *Historia de la deuda contraida en Londres con un apéndice sobre el estado actual de la hacienda pública por el Lic. Joaquín D. Casasús* (Impr. del Gobierno federal, 1885). The table on p. 110 gives a breakdown of the weapons acquired.

Mexico defaulted on them. The national government would spend the next sixty years in sovereign default, more or less barred from international capital markets, unable to finance the governance of the country, deeply unstable, and compelled to face crisis after crisis with an outmoded and dwindling arsenal. That this arsenal was unequal to the task is evidenced by the fact that by late 1847 nearly all of it—the guns, the cannon, and the ammunition—had fallen into the hands of the United States Army. The U.S.-Mexican War began in the spring of 1846. American forces defeated their Mexican counterparts in nearly every critical engagement and occupied Mexico City in September of 1847. The victors captured most of Mexico's guns and cannon and, finding much of it unfit for use, destroyed the weapons by the thousands.⁹ By the spring of 1848 Mexico's stunned minister of war reported that the nation had a mere forty-eight functioning cannon and 121 muskets in its stores.¹⁰

But Mexico would not be gun poor for long. During the 1850s and 1860s, in response to demand created by several coups and regional rebellions, more than a decade of civil war, and a foreign occupation, ammunition would pour into Mexico by the tons and firearms by the many tens of thousands.¹¹ Most of this material came from the United States, most of it came on credit, and mostly the terms were ruinous. An early example of the pattern came in 1854, when General Ignacio Comonfort, future president of Mexico, traveled to the U.S. searching for arms to sustain the rebellion against President Antonio

9. Americans found that most of Mexico's cannon tubes had been forged in the eighteenth century. See "Palo Alto Battlefield NHS: A Thunder of Cannon" (Chapter 7), n.d. http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/paal/thunder-cannon/chap7.htm, accessed December 5, 2012. After his victory at the Battle of Cerro Gordo, General Winfield Scott determined that the four thousand muskets he'd seized that day were too substandard to be used in his army, so he had them all destroyed. See Justin H. Smith, *The War with Mexico* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), II: 58. Scott likewise disabled the forty cannons he captured after the battle.

10. For the minister's figures, see José María Rao Bárcena, *Recuerdos de la invasion norteamericana, 1846–1848* (Mexico: Librería Madrileña de Juan Buxó y Co., 1883), 572–574. Elsewhere (p. 428) the author describes the pre-war Mexican arsenal as "all ancient flintlocks."

11. No one has worked out a credible estimate of the scale of the arms and munitions imported into Mexico in these years, but studies of the period do gesture at the overall demand. For example, Robert L. Scheina, in *Latin America's Wars: The Age of the Caudillo, 1791–1899* (Washington, DC: Brassey's Inc., 2003), 302, estimates that two hundred thousand Mexicans served under arms in the War of Reform, a civil war between conservatives and liberals over control of the national government (1857–1861). Robert Ryal Miller argues that by themselves Mexican agents in the U.S. during the 1860s secured tons of ammunition and hundreds of thousands of guns. Miller, *Arms across the Border: United States Aid to Juárez during the French Intervention in Mexico* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1973), 12.

López de Santa Anna. Comonfort eventually found a merchant patron in New York City, who, being an “enemy of all oppressive power,” and in return for half the tariffs of the port of Acapulco, loaned Comonfort the money necessary to buy arms, ammunition, and a boat for the rebellion and helped insure its eventual success.¹²

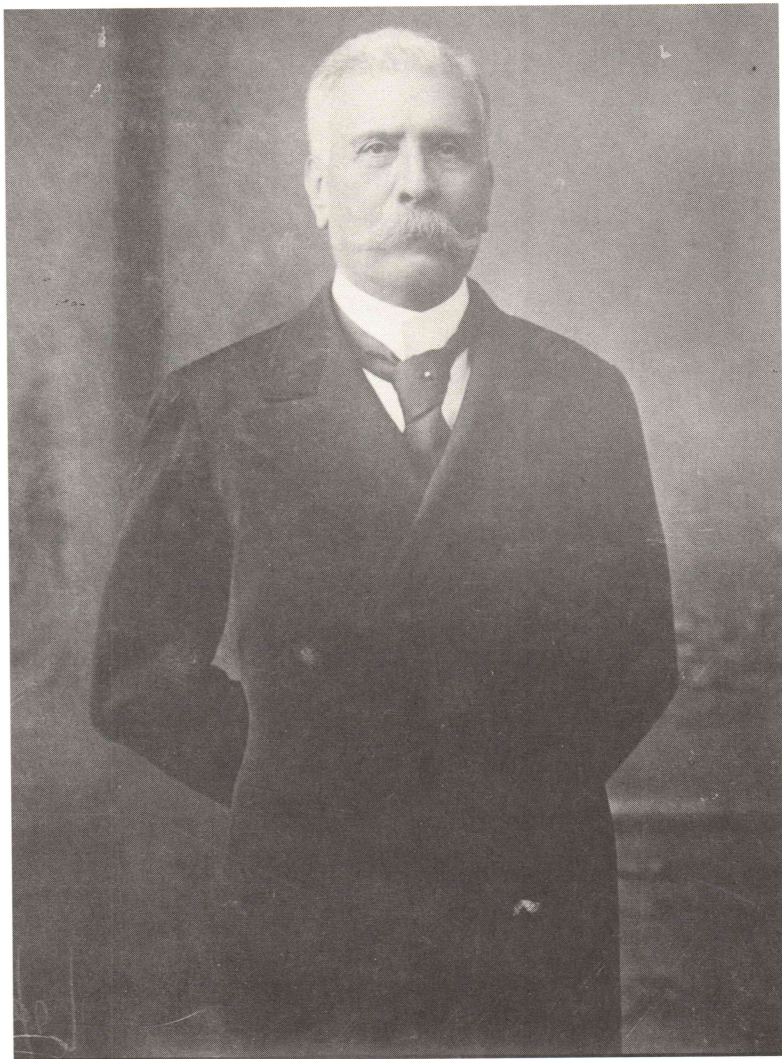
During the French Intervention of 1862–1867, Mexico’s conservatives conspired with Napoleon III to install Archduke Maximilian as Mexico’s king, a project backed by a European army that quickly took control of the country. Mexico’s president-in-exile, Benito Juárez, dispatched scores of agents to US cities in search of capital and weapons with which to retake control. Existential desperation encouraged them to make fantastical promises, and to sell more than thirty million dollars in bonds at steep discounts. Historian John Hart has sleuthed out the list of buyers, and it reads like a who’s who of America’s incipient Gilded Age: J. P. Morgan, William Aspinwall, Anson Phelps, William B. Dodge, Moses Taylor, Jay Gould, Henry Du Pont and the king of New York City’s arms merchants, Marcellus Hartley, among others.¹³

These men were not so naïve as to expect prompt repayment on the bonds. Mexico had earned its reputation for default; indeed the very pretext for the French Intervention had been Juárez’s suspension of all interest payments on international debt in 1861. Hartley and his peers expected the bonds to give them not scheduled returns so much as leverage; leverage to secure land deals, mining concessions, commercial privileges, and, above all, railroad projects that, all other things being equal, Mexicans could be expected to oppose. The creditors clamored for repayment as soon as the liberals retook the capital. Rebuffed, they spent the next decade hounding Juárez and his successor Sebastián Lerdo. Finally in 1876, despairing of ever recouping their investments, these bondholders conspired with colleagues in the railroad business to fund and arm a coup by Mexican General Porfirio Díaz.¹⁴ Díaz would effectively govern the

12. See Tenenbaum, *Politics of Penury*, 130; Richard Abraham Johnson, *The Mexican Revolution of Ayutla, 1854–1855: An Analysis of the Evolution and Destruction of Santa Anna’s Last Dictatorship* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 82; José María Lafragua, *Historia de la revolución de México contra la dictadura del general Santa Anna, 1853–1855* (México: V. García Torres, 1856), 153–161. Quote is from p. 157.

13. Miller, *Arms across the Border*; John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 1–45.

14. All critical points made in Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, 17, 26–60.



Porfirio Díaz, President of Mexico for most of the period 1876–1911, in a July 1907 portrait. *U.S. Library of Congress.*

country for the next thirty-three years, a period characterized by rapid development, profound inequality, and foreign ownership of broad swaths of the economy. There is a crooked but unbroken line between Mexico's frantic scramble for arms in the 1850s and 1860s on the one hand, and the rise and the durability of the Díaz dictatorship on the other. Mexico's would-be leaders believed they had to seek arms on credit in the 1820s, 50s, and 60s. But the long-term costs to the country in gold and in sovereignty proved to be immense.

* * *

Lesson #3 on how not to arm a state concerns a different aspect of the problem: guns have a variable shelf life, one indexed to state power. Put differently, if arms are a precondition for having strong states, a strong state is a precondition to holding onto arms. Mexico City struggled mightily over the nineteenth century not just to get guns but to keep the ones it had. Ill-cared for, broken, destroyed, lost, stolen, sold or traded by soldiers and enterprising officers, seized by enemies, secreted away by independent-minded military commanders, arms could and did exit government sight and government control in all kinds of ways.¹⁵

Some numbers from annual war department reports gesture at the problem. Adding the huge London arms deal to whatever was left over from the independence war, the Mexican government should have had more than 130,000 guns by the late 1820s, perhaps far more. Yet despite securing a few hard-won weapons deals over the next two decades, Mexico's army still limped towards its disastrous war with the United States with only a quarter as many: a mere 33,000 guns.¹⁶ Fast forward to 1867. By that year Juárez should, in theory, have had an abundantly supplied military, given the huge quantity of war material that had poured into the country over the previous two decades. But he didn't. Indeed he found his arsenal so spare that, despite his enormous debts, he and Lerdo purchased more than 30,000 guns for the military between December 1869 and June 1873. And yet in 1881, after half a decade of aggressive arms purchasing under the Díaz regime, the national arsenal consisted of *fewer than 27,000 guns*.¹⁷

These figures reflect not only weapons drain, but also technical and industrial innovations that continually made older guns obsolete. Arms technology advanced in the mid-nineteenth century faster than at any time before or since. In the 1850s Britain issued six

15. For illegal sale of government arms to private citizens, see, for example, Paul Vanderwood, *Disorder and Progress: Bandits, Police, and Mexican Development*, 2nd ed. (Wilmington: SR Books, 1992), 53–60.

16. For arms deals during the early 1840s, see Salvucci, *Politics, Markets*, 180. For the 1846 arsenal, see Rao Bárcena, *Recuerdos*, 572–574. The numbers are reportedly those given by the Minister of War in his 1848 report, and refer to army stocks on the eve of the US invasion.

17. Ygnacio Mejía, “Estado que manifiesta las armas y municiones compradas por cuenta de la nación, desde Diciembre del año de 1869 á la fecha,” Mexico, June 30, 1873, doc. 63 in *Memoria que el C. General de Division Ignacio Mejía, Ministro de Guerra y Marina presenta al 7th Congreso Constitucional, Mexico del secretario de estado y del despacho de guerra y marina*, Mexico, 1873. For Mexico's arsenal in 1881, see “Estado general del armamento y municiones que tiene el ejercito en la fecha,” May 31, 1881, doc. 69 in *Memoria que el secretario de estado y del despacho de guerra y marina, General de division Gerónimo Treviño presenta al Congreso del la Union* (Mexico: 1881).

hundred patents related to firearm technology, for instance; more than twice as many as it had over the previous two centuries. During this same period the United States became a global leader in innovating and industrially producing firearms.¹⁸ The dynamism of the global arms market compelled states to constantly re-invent their arsenals. Even if the Mexican state had kept their 70,000 Brown Bess muskets for decades, in other words, by Díaz's day they would have been fit only for museums. And this same rapidly moving technical horizon stymied Mexico's repeated efforts to establish its own arms industry. The state always lacked the capital, the machinery, and the expertise necessary to produce cutting-edge firearms in quantity.¹⁹ Whether through chronic weapons drain or technological obsolescence, then, the Mexican state's nineteenth-century arsenal was in perpetual crisis and decline. Hence the constant appeal to the arms market, whatever the terms.

* * *

The fourth and final "lesson" I see in Mexico's nineteenth-century experience is the most intractable and enduring: proximity to foreign arms producers inevitably emboldens alternatives to the state project. Mexico shared ungarded borders with territories controlled by two of the world's great gun-makers: the United States and British Honduras. This proximity undermined Mexico's state project in two ways. First, it energized rival polities in northern and southern borderlands, denying the state *de facto* sovereignty over much of its national territory in the nineteenth century. Independent Indian peoples from the far north—especially Apaches, Comanches, and Kiowas armed with guns obtained through their varied trade

18. For patents, see the classic work by William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society Since A.D. 1000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 237, n. 23. The literature on arms technology is very large. In addition to McNeill, helpful introductions include Alfred W. Crosby, *Throwing Fire: A History of Projectile Technology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); W. Y. Carman, *A History of Firearms: From Earliest Times to 1914* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004); and (far more comprehensive), W. W. Greener, *The Gun and Its Development*, 6th ed. (London: Cassell and Co. Ltd., 1896).

19. Roy Martin Marcot writes that Mexico established the *Fabrica Nacional de Armas* in 1881, where Remington rolling block rifles were produced by special arrangement with the company (see his *History of Remington Firearms* (Globe Pequot, 2005), 54). But the annual reports from the ministry of war make it clear that the dream of serious domestic arms production remained perpetually out of reach throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. See, for example, the reports of Mexico's minister of war for 1852, p. 75; 1869, pp. 80–86; and 1878, p. xxviii. As late as 1899 (pp. 14–17), the minister was expressing his hope that the state would acquire the machinery necessary to produce modern rifle cartridges in quantity.



Apache Rancheria with two men holding rifles, n.d. *National Archives*,
photo no. 530902.

networks—provoked a desperate security crisis across much of northern Mexico from the 1830s through the 1880s. Yaquis with guns from Arizona resisted the state program throughout the last third of the century. Maya in the Yucatán, outfitted with arms and ammunition from traders in British Honduras, launched the terrifically violent Caste War against Mexican *ladinos* in 1847 and would retain control over parts of the peninsula until the early 1900s.²⁰ And, of course, American colonists in Texas successfully seceded from Mexico, ultimately denying Mexico City *de jure* as well as *de facto* sovereignty over territory. Texans' victory in their war for independence (1835–1836) depended on the Mexican army's grave tactical blunders, but Texans wouldn't have been able to exploit those blunders but for the money and war material they'd obtained from the merchant community in neighboring Louisiana.²¹

20. See Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (Yale University Press, 2008), 104–109, for arms markets in Mexico's northern borderlands. For Yaquis, see Evelyn Hu-Dehart, "Development and Rural Rebellion: Pacification of the Yaquis in the Late Porfiriato," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 54:1 (February 1974): 72–93. Arms trafficking with rebel Maya generated an enormous (and bitter) correspondence between Mexico and Great Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century, scattered throughout Foreign Office record groups 50 and 15 at the British National Archives, in Kew, England.

21. For the New Orleans connection, see Edward L. Miller, *New Orleans and the Texas Revolution* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004). Coahuilan federalists likewise sought arms in Louisiana. See Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 158–160.

The other problem with proximity to a great gun-making country is that it offers a perpetual safe-haven and armory for men looking not to stand against the state, but to capture it. As we've already seen, various factions went north for guns during the War of Reform in the 1850s. Juárez and his allies crossed the border for sanctuary and arms during the French Intervention. Porfirio Díaz did the same in preparation for his rise to power, and when in 1911 the dictator finally fell it was in a revolution equipped in Texas and Arizona. Indeed, nothing better illustrates Mexico's unique vulnerability to the US arms market than the collapse of Díaz's decades-long regime. Unlike any of his predecessors, Díaz had assembled a competent army and security apparatus and amply equipped it with modern firearms and artillery, including scores of machine guns. And not least, he'd paid for most of it in cash. But when the Revolution began, Díaz learned quickly that his impressive consolidation of the means of destruction in Mexico had been hopelessly outpaced by the volcanic growth of the American firearms industry. Consider the output of a single American firm, Winchester: during World War I alone, Winchester made the allied powers more than half a million rifles and more than a quarter billion rounds of ammunition.²²

Meanwhile, a generation of rapid economic development in the borderlands ensured that Pancho Villa and other rebels enjoyed commercial conduits into the US arms industry, as well as the plunderable capital and property necessary to pay for guns and ammunition. American merchants supplied all comers with war material of every description. The El Paso firm Krakauer, Zork, and Moye, for example, once sold the *federales* one thousand kilometers of barbed wire and then immediately offered their constitutionalist enemies all the wire cutters they had in stock. American war material, whether bartered on the border; contracted for in New York, San Francisco, or New Orleans; or delivered to favorites in bulk by the US government, prolonged the Revolution, magnified its vast carnage, and helped determine its murky outcome.²³

22. Herbert G. Houze, *Winchester Repeating Arms Company: Its History & Development from 1865 to 1981* (Iola, WI: Krause Publications, 2004), 187.

23. Much has been written on this aspect of the Mexican Revolution. Arms are a recurring preoccupation of Friedrich Katz's magisterial *Life and Times of Pancho Villa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). See also Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler, *The Secret War in El Paso: Mexican Revolutionary Intrigue, 1906-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009); Harold Eugene Holcombe, "United States Arms Control and the Mexican Revolution,

The Revolution finally ground to a halt in 1920, after more than a million war-related deaths.²⁴ Postwar Mexico did not avoid uprisings or other kinds of internal violence, but the state did a credible job monopolizing arms and ensuring continuity of rule. Founded in 1929, Mexico's National Revolutionary Party, what would become the PRI, would govern the country for more than seventy years. Post-revolutionary Mexico escaped the serial crises of the nineteenth century, and the arms trade stopped posing an existential crisis for the state. Until now.

* * *

I began this essay insisting that Mexico's current problems with guns and governance were nothing new. But of course it is at least as easy to point out differences between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as it is to highlight similarities. Both can be good to think with, so I'll conclude this essay with one of each.

The difference: unlike the players and factions at work in Mexico's nineteenth century, cartels have few barriers to engaging with the international arms trade wherever and however they wish. We hear a lot in the United States about *narcotraficantes* getting guns and ammunition from borderland gun stores and gun shows, often through straw purchases: individuals buying material in their name and then selling it to cartel agents. This is undoubtedly happening on a huge scale. It is a continuation of the bonanza of the Mexican Revolution, with hundreds or even thousands of petty Krakauers, Zorks, and Moyes hustling the tragedy across the border. The cartels cultivate these people and find them useful, but they don't need them. Cartels get their guns from multiple sources.

Large stockpiles of weapons from US and Soviet proxy conflicts are still stored in government arsenals across Latin America, and

1910–1924,” Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Alabama, 1968; Luz María Hernández Sáenz, “Smuggling for the Revolution: Illegal Traffic of Arms on the Arizona-Sonora Border, 1912–1914,” *Arizona and the West* 28:4 (Winter 1986): 357–377; Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, 269–342. For Krakauer, Zork, and Moye, see Holcombe, “U.S. Arms Control,” 51–70. For borderland development in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); and Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border* (Princeton: University Press, 2011).

24. Scholarly estimates vary. For a detailed analysis that takes account of previous claims, see Robert McCaa, “Missing Millions: The Human Cost of the Mexican Revolution,” University of Minnesota Population Center, 2001. <http://www.hist.umn.edu/~rmccaa/missmill/mxrev.htm>, accessed Dec. 4, 2012.

these Cold-War-era weapons often fall into cartel hands. For example, a 2008 secret cable made available by Wikileaks explains that light anti-tank weapons and military-grade M433 grenades made in the United States and recovered in Mexico came from Honduran military stockpiles.²⁵ Still more weapons come directly from the Mexican government. Though Mexico has one of the smallest defense budgets in the hemisphere relative to its GDP, it nonetheless imports millions of dollars' worth of war material annually.²⁶ Corruption drains some of this firepower into cartel hands. In 2009, for example, Nuevo León's state secretary for public security estimated that cartels had infiltrated 50 percent of municipal and state police forces.²⁷ Moreover (and this is in continuity with the nineteenth century), Mexican military and police forces chronically hemorrhage from desertions. The founders of the brutal crime syndicate known as Los Zetas are the most famous such deserters, but the phenomenon is widespread. According to figures obtained from Mexico's Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, more than 160,000 soldiers have absconded from their military posts in the past twelve

25. "Wikileaks Reveals Arms Smuggling in Honduras," Inside Costa Rica.com, April 28, 2007. <http://www.insidecostarica.com/dailynews/2011/april/28/centralamerica11042801.htm>, accessed August 28, 2012.

26. In 2010 average military spending as a percentage of GDP in Latin America and the Caribbean was 1.42%. The 2010 figure for Mexico was .52%. See World Bank data, available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS>, accessed August 22, 2012. Precisely how much war material Mexico bought from vendors in the United States is difficult to determine. Section 655 Annual Military Assistance Reports that are provided to Congress by the Department of State (reports that arms tracking organizations like Just the Facts [http://justf.org/Sales_Detail?program=Direct_Commercial_Sales&country=Mexico, accessed August 25, 2012] rely upon rather too uncritically) do not provide detailed data on arms and equipment sold abroad. Rather, these reports provide data on "the aggregate dollar value and quantity of defense articles and defense services, by category, authorized to each foreign country." The reports also include a dollar amount for actual shipments by country by fiscal year (almost always far less than the authorized amount), but this figure is in the aggregate: amounts of different types of equipment and services actually shipped are not provided. Moreover the authorized amounts include "articles exported for use by US government agencies within the country of export as well as articles exported for use by US and Allied forces operating on foreign soil," but does not distinguish these articles from those intended for the country in question (http://www.pmdtc.state.gov/reports/655_intro.html, accessed August 22, 2012). In other words, these reports have (deliberately?) limited utility for assessing arms flows. For comparable opacity in the records of receiving countries, see Mark Bromley and Carina Solmirano, "Transparency in Military Spending and Arms Acquisitions in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Stockholm International Peace Research Policy Paper* 31 (Solna, Sweden, January 2012).

27. As reported by Bruce Williamson, US consul general in Monterrey, and leaked to the organization Wikileaks. See the document at <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/03/09MONTERREY102.html#>, accessed August 25, 2012.



Mexican police with five alleged members of the Zetas drug gang and the more than 200 firearms they had in their possession when arrested, June 9, 2011.

Associated Press Photo/Alexandre Meneghini, 110609027062.

years.²⁸ Deserters can make themselves more attractive to new employers if they manage to exit military service with their government-issued firearms.

Above all, we ought not exaggerate cartel dependence on shops and shows in the U.S. because cartels have access to many other international markets. Unlike any of Mexico's nineteenth-century actors, today's cartels are, of course, multinational organizations with vast resources and mature conduits into black markets around the world. The (now defunct) National Drug Intelligence Center estimated in 2009 that Mexican cartels and their Colombian suppliers "generate, remove, and launder between \$18 billion and \$39 billion in wholesale drug proceeds annually."²⁹ Today's cartels aren't beholden to "moneyed men" like those dogged nineteenth-century arms-seekers were. Today's cartels *are* the moneyed men. They only rely on financial institutions (including, we now know, the world's largest banks)

28. Calderón tried to staunch the flow by boosting military wages. But while desertions have declined from earlier in the decade, more than 56,000 military personnel have deserted since he took office. See Francisco Sandoval Alarcón, "Más de 56 mil militares han desertado en el sexenio," *Animal Politico*, April 18, 2012, <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2012/04/mas-de-56-militares-han-desertado-en-el-sexenio/>, accessed August 25, 2012.

29. "National Drug Threat Assessment 2009," National Drug Intelligence Center, US Department of Justice, Washington, DC, Dec. 2008, 49. The center fell victim to federal budget cutting in 2012.

to launder their vast incomes.³⁰ The end of the Cold War did much to free the international arms trade from ideology or geopolitical strategy, and today arms generate more revenue in the international black market than any other commodity—save drugs.³¹

With the proper kickbacks and contacts, even bit players with a fraction of the funding and sophistication of the major drug cartels can arrange for massive arms transfers from China, Eastern Europe, and other regions where assault weapons are more plentiful and cheaper. AK 47s, for example, cost about \$850 in the United States, but only around \$100 in Somalia. The intelligence forecasting firm StratFor reports sales of the larger, more high-powered rifles skyrocketed starting in 2008 out of fear that the new Obama administration would seek to ban such weapons. Increased demand has resulted in increased prices, and StratFor speculates that this alone has encouraged cartels to shift serious resources to other foreign arms markets.³² Cartels can and probably do buy weapons all over the world, and they can always pay in cash. No one in nineteenth-century Mexico could say the same, save perhaps Porfirio Díaz in the later phase of his rule. That's a vitally important difference between the nineteenth and the twenty-first centuries.

But there's a similarity more important still, one as simple as it is dispiriting. In the twenty-first century as in the nineteenth, there is precious little the Mexican government can do to alter the political economy of the arms trade equipping the rivals of the state. Hence Calderón's enormous, plaintive billboard made of guns, imploring those who hold the levers of power over this problem (hint: they read English) to send NO MORE WEAPONS! The United States could improve Mexico's unhappy situation by reforming its gun laws. Doing so would be rational, responsible, and ethical. But it wouldn't stop cartels from getting guns, not so long as they continue to be multi-billion dollar operations.

30. Several major banks have laundered billions for Mexican cartels. See Ed Vulliamy, "Global Banks are the Financial Service Wings of the Drug Cartels," *The Guardian*, July 21, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jul/21/drug-cartels-banks-hsbc-money-laundering>, accessed August 11, 2012.

31. Lara Lumpe, ed., *Running Guns: The Global Black Market in Small Arms* (London: Zed Books, 2000), 2.

32. Stratfor, "Mexico: Economics and the Arms Trade," July 9, 2009. http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20090708_mexico_economics_and_arms_trade, accessed October 12, 2011.

Many in the US government and in the defense industry insist that the security crisis calls for *more* guns: for large transfers of military equipment and specialized training that will supposedly equip the Mexican state to vanquish the cartels once and for all. But the state's (familiar) inability to protect its own arsenal is only one reason among many to be skeptical of this solution.³³ For those convinced that the decades-long hemispheric War on Drugs has been colossally counter-productive, shipping hundreds of millions of dollars worth of US-produced firearms, gunships, military aircraft, and surveillance technology to Latin American governments in order to disrupt drug supply is a tragic contemporary lesson in "how not to arm a state." Such military assistance is a continuation of a broader enforcement paradigm that has proved a spectacular failure when judged against its purported aims. Excepting marijuana, street prices for illicit drugs have fallen sharply in the U.S. over the past quarter century. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, for instance, over the past thirty years the street price of cocaine has dropped by nearly 75 percent. While use of particular drugs has varied over time, consumption of illicit narcotics in the U.S. has remained more or less stable overall. These are the accomplishments of a decades-long "war" that has cost many tens of thousands of lives across the hemisphere, cost US taxpayers tens of billions of dollars, and made the United States the world's great prisoner—both in absolute numbers of inmates and in percentage of its population incarcerated.³⁴ Fundamentally unlike conventional military problems—and unlike the armed cohorts that bedeviled Mexico's nineteenth-century state project—the illicit trafficking of drugs has proven more or less immune to militarized attacks on supply. Individual actors and organizations can of course be violently destroyed. But decades of evidence strongly suggest that the endeavor itself cannot.

The endeavor itself is the problem. The only way to dam up the *many* Iron Rivers of Guns pouring into Mexico today would be to

33. Skepticism has centered on a pattern of human rights abuses perpetrated by Latin American states while waging the War on Drugs. See, for example, "Neither Rights, Nor Security: Killings, Torture, and Disappearances in Mexico's 'War on Drugs'," Human Rights Watch, November 9, 2011, available at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2011/11/09/neither-rights-nor-security-o>, accessed Dec. 6, 2012.

34. See Eduardo Porter, "Numbers Tell of Failure in Drug War," *New York Times*, July 3, 2012; The International Center for Prison Studies, http://www.prisonstudies.org/info/worldbrief/wpb_stats.php?area=all&category=wb_poptotal, accessed Dec. 6, 2012.

deprive cartels of their riches. Doing *that* would require remaking US drug law, for a start, against the determined resistance of political, institutional, and business interests with a stake in the status quo.³⁵ So Mexico has little power over the arms trade that has once again become so consequential in the country. That's depressing but unsurprising, given Mexico's position in the international hierarchy. In this sense, the Mexican state's powerlessness over the problem isn't just a similarity to the traumatic nineteenth century. It's an inheritance from it.

35. Critics of legalization rightly point out that cartels engage in a wide range of criminal activities, and speculate plausibly that sales of illicit narcotics represent a steadily shrinking percentage of their revenues. But few doubt that illicit narcotics remain critical to their business, or that legalization would reduce profits. For a useful primer on the debate on profits and legalization of one narcotic (and on the profoundly divergent assumptions that our lack of good data allows competing sides to indulge in), see Olga Kazan, "How Marijuana Legalization Will Affect Mexico's Cartels, in Charts," Nov. 9, 2012. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2012/11/09/how-marijuana-legalization-will-affect-mexicos-cartels-in-charts/>, accessed Dec. 6, 2012.

ADVENTURES AT SEA:

A. M. Ebbets's Voyage to California in 1849

By Jane Apostol

ABSTRACT: The shipboard account kept by nineteen-year-old forty-niner Arthur M. Ebbets brings to life the hardships and diversions of the journey around Cape Horn. His adventures on the voyage presaged a later career marked by risks, setbacks, and successes in California.

Keywords: California Gold Rush; Cape Horn; sea voyage; sailing ships

One of the fascinating documents in the Huntington Library's manuscript collection is the shipboard journal kept in 1849 by a spirited nineteen-year-old passenger, Arthur Mercein Ebbets. Excited by news of the gold discovery in California and by the prospect of launching a career on the West Coast, Ebbets resigned his job as a New York dry goods clerk. With money provided by his father, he bought a share in the New England Mining and Trading Company, which had reserved a block of cabins on the packet ship *Pacific*, one of the first gold-rush-bound vessels to sail from New York to San Francisco via Cape Horn.¹ In addition to

The author expresses thanks to the Huntington Library for permission to consult and quote from the Curletti Papers (A. M. Ebbets) and the Augustin W. Hale Papers.

1. The *Pacific*, a six-year-old, 532-ton sailing vessel owned by Capt. Hall J. Tibbits and Frederick Griffing, was one of over 750 American vessels leaving North American ports for California in 1849. Its fare for first-class was raised from the normal rate of \$250 to \$300, due to gold-rush demand. The New England Mining and Trading Company members (of which Ebbets was one) received a discount, to \$275, for purchasing a block of cabins, but then the ship's owners crowded 75

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his personal baggage, Ebbets brought aboard miners' tools, building materials, and household goods, all of which he hoped to sell at a profit in San Francisco.

I. CALIFORNIA-BOUND

In the record he kept of his journey, Ebbets began by way of introduction: "As it will be interesting to my friends as well as myself in after years to have an account of my voyage of over 20,000 miles, I shall commence although at a very late date (April 3d) to keep a Journal, trusting principally to memory, for I have kept but a log since I left home. But I hope all who may read will bear in mind that a ship is a bad place to collect one's ideas and still more owing to the motion to write them."² He then resumed:

January 22^d 1849. Monday, at 12 ½ o'clock. I hardly know how or by what means but I found myself on shipboard—standing in everybody's way—soliloquizing whether to go or not to go before seeing and bidding my particular friends "Goodbye"—but discretion being the better part of valor I thought it wasn't best to *stop the ship while I ran back*. So I went to the Cabin and sat down and soon the motion of the vessel set me meditating upon the ups and downs of life—asking myself whether I, having always enjoyed an uninterrupted life of pleasure and happiness, was not going to suffer privations and hardships which I had no reason to expect to escape from.³

The privations began early. Supper, he wrote, was "a sumptuous meal such as the Apostles once sat down to—with the exception that instead of loaves and fishes we had the loaves without the fishes."⁴

passengers into cabin-space designed for 50. Charles R. Schultz, *Forty-Niners 'Round the Horn* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 13; Schultz, "The Gold Rush Voyage of the Ship *Pacific*: A Study in Ship Management," *American Neptune* 53 (Winter 1993): 190-193.

2. Arthur Mercein Ebbets, Journal, "Ship *Pacific*, Capt. H. I. Tibbits, from New York to San Francisco, California." Curletti Papers (A. M. Ebbets), Huntington Library HM 69653. For a narrative blending the accounts of five other passengers, see Salvador A. Ramirez, *From New York to San Francisco via Cape Horn, 1849: The Gold Rush Voyage of the Ship "Pacific," an Eyewitness Account* (Carlsbad, CA: The Tentacled Press, 1985); Schultz, *Forty-Niners 'Round the Horn*, incorporates information from five passengers (Thomas Whaley, Charles Williams, James H. Gager, J.D.B. Stillman, and Anonymous), one passenger's letter (Phil Walden), and a fictionalized account by passenger J. Ross Browne.

Several of the *Pacific*'s passengers, in addition to Ebbets, had successful careers in California. Mark Hopkins was one of the "Big Four," whose Central Pacific Railroad formed the western section of a transcontinental railroad. J. D. B. Stillman helped establish one of the early hospitals in Sacramento and founded one of the first medical societies in California. J. Ross Browne was the shorthand recorder for the 1849 Constitutional Convention that resulted in California statehood.

3. Ebbets, Journal, January 22, 1849, 1.

4. *Ibid.*, 2.

His cabin, shared with fellow New Yorker James W. Bingham, resembled a small vault with two coffins, and he woke the next day, he complained, feeling like a disinterred person.

First-cabin passengers like Ebbets had been promised first-class accommodations, food, and service, but these were not provided. In fact, eight people refused to sail on the *Pacific*, claiming it was dangerously overcrowded and overloaded. They demanded refund of their passage money and, when this was not forthcoming, they filed suit against the ship's owners, Captain Hall J. Tibbits and his partner, Frederick Griffing.⁵

Those who continued on the voyage also were unhappy with conditions aboard ship. "As our fare was growing miserable and the stewards and cooks were rather careless about the cleanliness of the dishes which we ate off of," Ebbets reported, "we thought it best to have a meeting of the passengers[,] who drew up a petition requesting the captain to improve their fare."⁶ The captain responded to the petition in outrage: "Damn you! . . . I'll put any man in irons that makes difficulty aboard. If you attempt any difficulty with me, blast you, I'll put a match to the powder magazine and blow you all to hell!"⁷

Passengers devised various amusements to relieve the monotony of their days at sea. Shooting at birds swimming alongside was considered a fine sport. Card playing was popular (especially when losers had to pay with claret or brandy punch). One evening, to the music of two violins and a guitar, the men formed a cotillion, "and though no ladies graced our boards, or soft hands were put forth for us to squeeze, or slender waists to encircle, still on shutting our eyes as we went through the different figures, the indistinct music and the rolling of the vessel tended to recall to our minds a party at home when all had drunk a little *too much wine*."⁸ Passengers also were entertained by two handwritten newspapers produced on board and posted on deck. J. Ross Browne, "a young man of considerable wit,"⁹ edited the *Pacific Daily Journal*. Ebbets and his roommate, J. W. Bingham, promptly responded with their own paper, *The Pacific Evening Herald*.

5. For extensive discussion of the conflict with Captain Tibbits, see Schultz, "Gold Rush," 190-200.

6. Ebbets, *Journal*, February 4, 1849, 5-6.

7. Lina Fergusson Browne, ed., *J. Ross Browne: His Letters, Journals and Writings* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 77.

8. Ebbets, *Journal*, February 7, 1849, 7.

9. *Ibid.*, February 10, 1849, 8.

"Feeling the responsibility of my situation," said Ebbets, "I devote a great portion of my time in writing articles."¹⁰

About eight miles from Rio de Janeiro, the *Pacific* had a dramatic encounter with a Prussian ship just leaving the harbor and sailing against the wind. By the rules of navigation, Captain Tibbits should have given way, but he refused to change course and the two ships came dangerously close. "As the current carried the brig past us," Ebbets wrote, "his jib-boom caught our American flag and carried it away. The [Prussian] Captain was rejoiced, for he considered himself insulted. He hoisted our flag under his national colors—which was a great disgrace to us—and then pulling it down, tore it and rammed it in a cannon and fired it at us."¹¹ One passenger on the *Pacific* fired his own weapon, hurling a chamber pot, which shattered in a thousand pieces on the deck of the Prussian brig.

After an unsuccessful attempt to rescue the flag, the *Pacific* continued to Rio and remained in the harbor for just over three weeks. During that time the aggrieved passengers met with US Consul Gorham Parks and petitioned for the recall of Captain Tibbits. "His treatment to us from New York had been such that even a dog would have resented it," Ebbets charged. "We had to submit to insult and endure all sorts of imposition, but we had our redress when we arrived in port—the American Minister and Consul took up our cause and after a careful investigation decided that Capt. Tibbits should be deposed and another substituted in his place. Capt. Geo. Eastabrook [or Easterbrook], from Bristol, R.I. was given the command and Capt. T. and his wife being refused passage went home in the American barque *E. Corning*. Capt. E. was introduced to us by the consul Mr. Parks on board the ship and was received by the passengers with great enthusiasm. He immediately commenced preparations for sea by laying in stores of all kinds, some of which were entirely unexpected, and at last we set out to sea, our hearts lightened with the prospect of a pleasant voyage."¹²

Ebbets took advantage of the stopover in Rio to explore its many attractions. He climbed Sugarloaf Mountain and planted the

10. Ibid., February 15, 1849, 9.

11. Ibid., March 8, 1849, 19.

12. Ibid., April 2, 1849, 41. After Tibbits, once back in New York, complained to shipping houses and insurance companies, the US Consul in Rio, Gorham Parks, was removed from office. Schultz, *Forty-Niners 'Round the Horn*, 202. In his Journal, Ebbets variously spelled the captain's name as Eastabrook, Easterbrook, and Estabrook.

American flag there. He also made an excursion to the top of Corcovado Mountain, where he carved on a tree his name, the date, and an American flag. He visited the famed Botanic Garden, the Monastery of St. Bento ("the largest and richest in the Western world"), and boasted that "either my foreign appearance or (excuse my vanity) the beauty of my mustache drew the attention of a number of pretty Brazilian girls' eyes towards me."¹³ He summed up his Rio experiences with the observation: "Strangers visiting Rio can be interested and amused for the space of two weeks, for in that time they can ride over the surrounding country and view some beautiful prospects, can visit the different places worthy of note—such as Churches, Convents, Monasteries, Academy of Arts, Museum, opera &c.—and have many an opportunity of seeing civil, religious & military processions, for they generally have two or three a week, independent of the Carnival time, but at the expiration of two weeks he will wish to leave."¹⁴

Soon after leaving Rio, Ebbets noted with sorrow: "In the afternoon we were called upon to witness the melancholy demise of one of our companions whom we shipped at Rio—the cause of his death was unknown. With feelings nearly overcome we launched him into his capacious grave and as his tail disappeared beneath the briny ocean I heaved a sigh for that tail was the last of our fresh pork"¹⁵

Ebbets wrote at length about the many albatrosses that surrounded the ship:

As the ship was going but slowly we succeeded in catching twelve of them with a hook and line. One measured 10 ft 9 in from tip to tip of its wings and had a body the size of a large turkey, with a beautiful bill about 6 inches in length and very large otherwise. Being a great curiosity the poor creatures were hardly on deck before one was pulling at a head, another its legs, and some half a dozen had hold of the feathers, and the bird was pulled in pieces before being killed. Each bird was decapitated in this manner, and in less than 15 minutes almost every passenger had some part to keep in remembrance of their Albatross friends. I sincerely believe [that,] had a Patagonian come on board[,] some of the passengers would have been

13. Ebbets, *Journal*, 26-27. Part of a long entry beginning March 9, 1849, but other dates not listed. Ebbets admitted taking no notes in Rio, but relied on his memory. Sao Bento, the elaborately adorned Benedictine monastery completed in 1641, continues as an active monastery to the present day.

14. *Ibid.*, 40-41.

15. *Ibid.*, April 15, 1849, 47.

so anxious to have a portion of him to keep as a curiosity that he would have met with the unhappy fate of the Albatross.¹⁶

The doctor took the eyes to dissect, Mrs. Griffing (wife of the co-owner) took a wing to wear at the New York opera, and Ebbets dined on one of the carcasses: "It tasted *rather strong*, but the glory of eating an Albatross done [*sic*] away with all feelings of delicacy which I had on the subject—a treat to have meat of any kind after 30 days at sea."¹⁷

Ebbets predicted that sailing from Rio around Cape Horn to Valparaiso would be the coldest, stormiest and most dangerous part of their voyage. On April 24 he reported:

Cloudy & heavy wind. Course SW—8 knots. Wind soon increased to a gale, and with the increase of the wind commenced our troubles. The heavy seas which broke over our ship with great violence compelled us to keep below. There, it is true, we had no seas to fear, but one was kept in constant watchfulness to preserve his head and limbs, for chairs, trunks, boxes, & barrels were chasing each other backward and forward across the cabin floor, and it was a laughable sight to witness by the dim light of the cabin (for the hatch coverings were on) some 60 persons bracing themselves in every possible manner on the dinner table where they had got for safety. We all escaped without any material damage except to our appetites.¹⁸

On May 4, at the conclusion of twenty-two days rounding the Cape, Ebbets wrote,

At last we have a wind with which we can quit the stormy Cape—never, I hope, to visit it again. The stories regarding the dangers of the Horn are no fabrications. Our cold reception and a gale at the onset was an initiation preparatory to the rough treatment which we were to receive. But our Ship was staunch, resisting the gales of wind and the angry billows. Not a spar was broken or a sail rent, but steadily though slowly against gales of head winds she made a little headway every day. She has carried us clear of all danger, and at the rate which we are going now will soon carry us into warm and settled weather."¹⁹

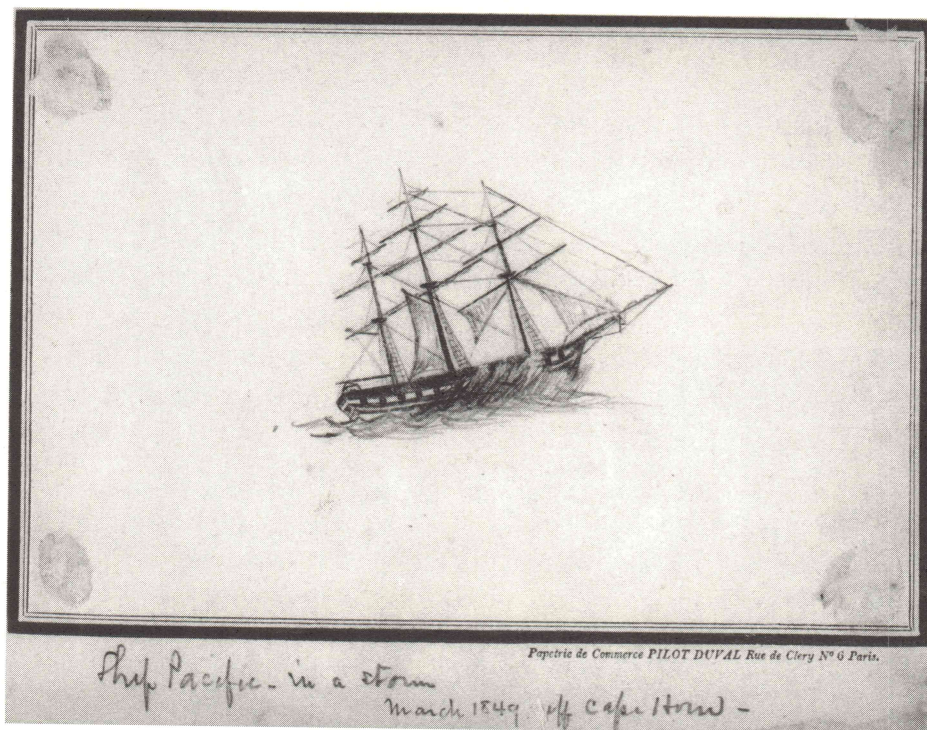
In celebration of their safe passage around the Horn, the New England Mining & Trading Company paraded on deck to the music of a fife and drum and to the sound of a triumphant cannonade. A few days earlier the men had found a new outlet for high spirits.

16. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1849, 52-53.

17. *Ibid.*, 53.

18. *Ibid.*, April 24, 1849, 50.

19. *Ibid.*, May 4, 1849, 55. For a discussion of gold rush voyages based on a composite of many Forty-Niners' first-hand accounts, see Schultz, *Forty-Niners*.



The ship *Pacific* in a storm off Cape Horn, March 1849. Sketch by Ebbets. Courtesy of The Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California (Curletti Papers).

"The deck is covered with ice & snow," Ebbets wrote, "and the passengers for amusement are snowballing each other—fine sport for May."²⁰ Soon the passengers were enjoying another diversion:

A cry of "whales astern" hurried me on deck, where immediate preparations were made to go after them. We lowered the boat and seven of us started in pursuit. At first we were unsuccessful, having a very poor harpoon, but we were soon repaid for our trouble, for as one rose directly in front of the boat the harpoon was thrown into him. As it struck he raised himself nearly out of the water and then plunged down some 400 ft below the boat. The cry of "stern all" from the harpooner brought the uninitiated whalers to their senses, for they seemed paralyzed and the order had to be repeated before they obeyed it. The whale, having stayed down a few minutes, rose and darted ahead, dragging us at the rate of 6 miles an hour, and as he darted first one way and then another, it required all our watchfulness to keep the boat from upsetting. He drew us towards the school which was some 10 miles astern of the ship. We were soon among them, and as they rose around us we had to strike them with our oars to keep them from swamping our frail boat. As we had no lance we could not kill

20. Ebbets, Journal, May 6, 1849, 56.

him but were forced to let him tear out, for we were fast leaving the ship. Our ride was a fine one.²¹

Captain Easterbrook had asked if everyone was willing to stop at Callao instead of Valparaíso to take on water. "A vote of the passengers was taken and they unanimously decided in favor of Callao—probably, if I may be allowed to express an opinion—the prospect of seeing the handsomest ladies in the world at Lima was the principal inducement for them to vote as they did."²²

En route to Callao, the ship passed "Robinson Crusoe's Island," the most noted of the Juan Fernández Islands. A great admirer of Defoe's story, Ebbets filled ten pages of his journal describing his own experiences on the island.

II. ROBINSON CRUSOE'S ISLAND

Saturday 19th. On a voyage as long as ours it would be surprising if something did not happen once in a while to make it interesting. A Journal at sea is not interesting, that is each day singly, but once in a while something will happen which will repay the writer for keeping it and the reader for the time he has spent in its perusal. This day commenced an incident which I shall always remember and never get tired of thinking about. It was a calm though pleasant morning, the ship heading NW by W, when I was awoke [sic] by the cry of "land ho!" Hurrying on deck I saw a little speck on the horizon and it was at once declared to be an Island on which Robinson Crusoe was shipwrecked. All had a great desire to see it, but a few of us not thinking a glance at it sufficient, resolved to lower our boat and trust to chance on getting ashore. At 9 A.M. although forewarned by the Captain that we could not reach it as it was 60 miles ahead, eleven passengers among whom were Bingham, Griffing, & Capt. Tibbits' son, started loaded down with guns, ammunition, fish lines, a day's provisions, a lamp and a pocket compass.

We were soon[,] by the aid of five good oarsmen and a sail[,] some distance ahead of the ship. The sea was perfectly calm and as we glided through the water seemingly raising the land at every stroke I thought of the time when I read with so much interest the "Adventures of Robinson Crusoe and His Man Friday" and could hardly realize that if we were favored that I might walk over his dominion.

Every hour we changed hands at the oars and at 3 P.M. as we were nearly out of sight of the ship, we took the opinion of all whether it was

21. Ibid., May 18, 1849, 60. Another journal-keeper aboard the *Pacific*, Jacob Stillman, participated in this adventure, but his account emphasized its danger and expressed his fears. He described Ebbets as one of the "naughty boys" aboard. Jacob D. B. Stillman, *Around the Horn to California in 1849* (Palo Alto, CA: Lewis Osborne, 1967), 53, 66-68.

22. Ebbets, Journal, April 29, 1849, 54.



Passengers embarking from the *Pacific* for an expedition to Crusoe's Island.
 From J. Ross Browne, *Crusoe's Island* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1864), 13.
 Courtesy of Huntington Library.

best to turn back or go ahead. No one agreed to go back. We saw the sun set and the stars make their appearance one after another, and as the shades of night kept drawing around us, making the Island look black and dismal in the distance, we then began to see the danger we had unguardedly run into, but our only course was to the Island, and as a breeze sprang up we were in hopes to reach it before night.

The sky was watched intently and we followed the course of a heavy black cloud which seemed determined to head us off. It was indication of a squall which soon came upon us with great violence. The wind blew hard, hurrying us through the water. The rain fell fast, and as the sea dashed upon us we thought how foolish we were to risk our lives for the little pleasure we would experience on landing on the Island. But fortune favored us. We rode the waves lightly and [were] soon under the high mountains so near that we could hear the breakers dash against the rocks. Being on the lookout ahead I thought it best to lower the sail and row. The sail was taken in and we pulled ahead slowly, hoping to find a harbor in which we could land. On doubling a bluff I saw a light ahead. Heading towards it we pulled with renewed vigor, while those who were not rowing loaded their rifles for various were the surmises as to the reception we were to meet with. After rowing about six miles we saw the light was on the water. Presently a ship loomed up. Hailing her, "Ship ahoy," she answered ship *Brooklyn* from New York. We could not contain our joy at our



Remains of Robinson Crusoe's Cave. Sketch by Ebbets. *Courtesy of Huntington Library, Curletti Papers.*

unexpected success but gave "three cheers" and rushed on deck. It was about 4 o'clock in the morning and as we made our appearance on deck, the passengers—almost destitute of clothing in their hurry to see us—crowded around and on being told that we had left our ship some 65 miles astern they looked at us in amazement and would hardly believe that we had come that distance. A Mr. Scribner claimed acquaintanceship with me and said he knew my Father and brother. He took us into the Cabin and introduced us to Capt. Richardson, who received us with pleasure. After resting awhile we were invited to partake of a bountiful meal which had been prepared for us, and to which we all did justice.

At 5 A.M. Sunday morning we pulled ashore accompanied by Capt. R. and Mr. Scribner. We visited the remains of an old fortification—the cells once occupied by convicts, but now deserted—and residences of the seven male inhabitants of the Island. From those we proceeded to the memorable cave of Alexander Selkirk and as I stood inside of it I could hardly realize my situation, for it seemed more like a dream than reality. The cave is dug back into the mountain 20 ft; it is 10 ft high and about 20 wide. It faces the sea and in front of it is a level space on which [are] growing peach trees and wild radishes. It is a romantic spot situated in a beautiful valley through which a stream of cool water flows, and on each side are mountains which rise nearly perpendicular some 3000 ft, covered with wild oats, peach and myrtle trees.

I took a ramble up the mountain, startling in my ascent the wild goats who made the inaccessible cliffs their home, and as I looked down at the cave and through the valley and up the mountains on which were feeding wild asses and horses and saw no living being but myself I felt like repeating the lines uttered by Selkirk the sailor, "I am monarch of all I survey."

I was loth to descend but as the boat was waiting for me I hurried down. Capt. R. proposed fishing to which we acceded, anchoring in water nearly 200 ft deep, so clear that we could see the fish swimming around the rocks. We dropped our lines and in less than an hour filled a barrel with fish weighing from 1 to 30 lbs. Among the fish caught was an electric eel which measured nearly six ft in length and some crawfish which very much resemble the lobster.

At 5 P.M. we dined aboard the *Brooklyn* and after dinner proceeded to visit a remarkable cave. We entered it in a boat and landed on a pile of rocks 70 ft or more from the entrance. After toiling up an ascent of nearly 200 ft we reached the top and regaled ourselves with a drink of pure and cold water which found its way through the crevices of the mountain which towered over us nearly 2,500 feet.

As night was approaching we returned to the ship to make preparations (notwithstanding the kind invitation of Capt. R. to sleep on board) for encamping on shore, choosing that romantic manner of sleeping in preference to a soft bed on shipboard.

We proceeded to one of the Convicts' caves and having spread our boat sail for a bed and cut some peach branches for a pillow we laid down at 6 P.M. worn out with excitement and fatigue. Some fears were entertained of the Spaniards, but after numerous false alarms occasioned by a stray goat or the braying of an ass we fell asleep, but I slept but four hours, for at ten benumbed with cold I was forced to get up.

I found one of our companions up, so with his assistance I made a fire in the next cave and spent my time in cooking some fish in the ashes and warming my benumbed limbs. The night passed slowly. We saw the sun rise, but daylight brought no vessel in sight causing us to feel somewhat anxious about our ship. The *Brooklyn* intended sailing that day, and we did not much relish being left alone in company with those treacherous Spaniards, some of whom it is reported murdered a sailor the year before.

We breakfasted with Capt. R. and after breakfast went ashore intending to climb the mountain and look out for our ship. As I was resting about two-thirds of the distance up the mountain, looking towards the sea, I saw something resembling a ship at a distance. Presently the cry of "*Pacific* ahoy" from one of the passengers who was at the mountain top was heard and soon the cry passing from one to another was carried down the mountain, through the valley and in a few seconds the "boys" on board the ship *Brooklyn* gave us "three cheers" for they shared our anxiety.

Hurrying down the mountain we were soon on board the *Brooklyn* making preparations for our departure, but while waiting a storm came

up. It rained hard and blew so violently that the *Brooklyn* dragged her anchors and came very near going ashore. As Capt. R. thought he would be compelled to go to sea, we bade them all "goodbye" and pulled ashore. On getting there we found it was impossible owing to the violence of the storm to put to sea. After building a large fire as a signal for our ship we started for a cabin owned by a Yankee sailor, a very suspicious character, where we intended lodging for the night. His house was built of straw, with a bed in one corner and a few stones arranged at one end to cook on. His cooking utensils consisted of two tin cups, a tea kettle and frying pan.

After a cup of tea and a piece of salt meat we laid down to sleep—a goat skin our bed & a log our pillow; our feet pointed towards the fire within a few inches of the coals. An old saying is "In traveling one becomes acquainted with *strange bedfellows*." Experience has taught me the truth of this proverb, for my bed was occupied by numerous animals—bugs and snakes of every description—causing me to pass a restless night, dreaming of Menagerie Keepers and Tamers of wild animals.

At 4 in the morning we were up, our breakfast of fish under way in the frying pan; before daylight we were down at the beach, and as the day broke we saw a sail on the horizon which seemed about 15 miles distant. Launching our boat we were soon under head way . . . bidding adieu to the Island we had taken so much trouble to reach . . .

We left the Island at daybreak, cheering the *Brooklyn*'s passengers as we passed them and headed out to sea for the sail which was just in sight. As we neared her she proved to be our old friend the brig *Sarah McFarland* bound in for water. Seeing another sail whose topgallant sails were just visible above the horizon we steered for her, not at all discouraged, and at 9 A.M. we stood "once more on the deck of our own swift gliding craft." The passengers crowded around and congratulated us on our miraculous escape for most of them had given us up for lost. A few in their benevolent farsightedness had provided a meal for us supposing we were nearly starved. Nothing can paint the surprise and anger depicted on their countenances when we refused their meal, telling them we could not eat crackers and salt meat after living on fresh meat, lobster, and salad, and peaches.

My principal cause of regret was for the Capt., who had not slept since we left, but as for the passengers their anger was caused by their disappointment in not being with us. 'Tis true—it was a hazardous and romantic adventure—one which I would not again undertake—but still one which I would not have missed for a fortune. Nothing but the Island of Juan Fernández—the dominion of Robinson Crusoe—would have tempted me, but even that would not tempt me again.²³

23. Ibid., May 19, 1849, 61-70. The journal of Stillman, who did not participate in this side excursion, reports the anxiety of the ship's captain over the passengers who had gone astray. The *Pacific* diverted its course around the lee side of the island in search of them, in vain. On the fourth day, rounding the north side, they glimpsed the signal fire and then saw the boat heading toward them. Stillman reported that the captain ordered everyone on the ship to greet the miscreants in silence to

When Bingham left New York, a friend presented him with two champagne bottles. He intended to save one for the Fourth of July, the other for arrival in San Francisco. After a visit to Crusoe's Island, however, Bingham decided not to delay a celebration, and he invited the captain and Mr. Griffing to join Ebbets and him in their cabin. "The bottles were produced, the wire cut, but there was no 'pop' to the cork. This was rather a damper, but still he overlooked that and after extracting the cork as quick as possible he filled our glasses. The wine did not sparkle, but that was overlooked (for we do not stand on such trifles on shipboard). Bingham gave his toast, our glasses were put to our lips, but a taste was sufficient. With one accord we all exclaimed—Gin! While Bingham faintly echoed 'taken in!' But we put a good face on the matter and swallowed disappointment or gin, whichever you please."²⁴

III. CALLAO TO CALIFORNIA

Ebbets and Bingham went ashore in Callao on the first of June. After a brief stroll through town, the two friends decided to walk the eight miles into Lima. The dry countryside soon gave way to a luxuriant landscape, with gardens, orchards, and streams on either side of the road. At last they reached the city gate and the broad avenue leading to the arcaded Grand Plaza. The street, Ebbets said, was paved in a kind of mosaic, inlaid with small stones and the knuckle bones of sheep. The most impressive building on the Plaza was the Cathedral, "which far surpasses in size, structure, and magnificence anything I ever saw at home."²⁵ From the Grand Plaza the friends walked to the Alameda, whose chief delight Ebbets described with enthusiasm:

Here may be seen the '*Saya y manta*' [sic: *manto*] in perfection—and I must say the novelty of the dress, the beautiful contour of the figure enclosed, and the one eye looking boldly at me as I passed almost tempted me to tear the covering from the face and disclose the features concealed. But that could not be for the dress is held sacred from insult, and no one but whom she may wish can see the face or know it. It enables the wearer to mix in all kinds of society, to visit the Theatre unattended, and to pass (if she be

signal their anger at the delay and concern caused by the irresponsible adventurers. Stillman, *Around the Horn*, 68-72.

24. Ebbets, *Journal*, May 31, 1849, 73-74.

25. *Ibid.*, [June 1], 1849, 76.



A Lima lady making a call. Sketch by Ebbets. *Courtesy of Huntington Library, Curletti Papers.*

married) her husband in the street unrecognized, for though he may suspect, the law of custom will preserve her from discovery. But I must describe the dress, for it is unknown in our country.

The *Saya* is a silk dress plaited very close for about 12 inches below the waist. Below that the folds are very large—it contains about 30 yards of silk and frequently costs from 60 to 100\$.

The *Mant[o]* is a silk or canton crape covering fastened to the *Saya* at the waist and brought up over the head and shoulders, concealing as much of the face as the wearer may wish—usually all but one eye. It is generally opened below the face, disclosing a beautiful bust, over which is loosely thrown a beautifully embroidered canton crape or silk shawl whose ends

seem purposely to point at the pretty little feet for which the Lima ladies are celebrated.²⁶

Forgetting the ladies—but not for long—Ebbets explored the city of Lima. He admired the tempting display of fruits and vegetables in the market but was unable to buy anything with his American coins. He visited the English reading room (where he found no American papers), and he explored the museum, two monasteries, and three convents, including the splendid Convent of St. Francisco. On his last day in Lima he witnessed the Grand Festival of Corpus Christi with its impressive procession headed by the Archbishop and the President. The balconies and windows were filled with ladies, a sight prompting Ebbets to admit “that the report ‘that the ladies of Lima were the handsomest in the world’ was very near the truth, though I am more partial to a northern complexion.”²⁷ Another passenger, Augustin W. Hale, had no reservations on the subject of pulchritude. “*The ladies!! The Ladies!!! the most beautiful, enchanting, & bewitching appearance of the ladies I cannot describe, but I am sure I shall never forget.*”²⁸

Upon leaving New York in January, the passengers in first-class cabins were promised three champagne dinners en route—one on crossing the Equator in the Atlantic (they were served salt pork instead), one on rounding the Horn (when they were served nothing), and another on crossing the Equator in the Pacific. Reminded of his broken promise, Mr. Griffing finally agreed that a good meal would be served after the ship left Callao. “The day has at last arrived,” Ebbets reported with enthusiasm. “Our cabin on deck is filled with dishes such as never before graced the boards of the ship *Pacific*. I looked at them and could hardly realize that they were but a foretaste of what was to come. At 4 ½ P. M. we took our seats at the table, which looked as though some kind Fairy anticipating our wishes had touched our dishes of salt meats, dried apples and beans with her wand, transforming them into dishes of boiled and roasted Turkey, boiled and roasted Mutton, fresh beef and fine hams, chicken salad, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, pies of numerous kinds, and almonds and raisins, with ale and champagne to wash them down.”²⁹

26. Ibid., [June 4], 1849, 77-78.

27. Ibid., [June 7], 1849, 85.

28. Augustine W. Hale Journal, June 7, 1849, 133. Augustin W. Hale Papers, Huntington Library.

29. Ebbets, Journal, June 11, 1849, 94-95.

The large dining table soon was put to other uses. "It is a laughable sight to take a look down the main hatch at the table beneath," Ebbets remarked. "Almost every trade is seen in some shape there—some mending their old clothes, others their boots, some making caps, others pistol belts; some fixing their guns and some polishing horns for powder flasks, while some 8 or 10 have proved themselves artists by drawing and painting numerous sights at Lima and Callao. The last has been my amusement for the last week."³⁰

Another amusement—or occupation—was collecting rain water in pails and basins in which to do laundry. "Everywhere about the deck are seen *men*—their arms bared up to their elbows in suds," Ebbets observed. "I chose an easier and more lazy but less cleanly mode of washing. Tied to a string I have committed my clothes to the ocean, whose rolling billows prove a good washing machine. No soap, no labor and no expense, but once in a while Neptune, always up to his pranks, slips a knot and provides himself with a suit of clothes."³¹

Preparations for a Fourth of July celebration began two weeks in advance. A planning committee was appointed, musicians rehearsed their program, and a notice of General Orders was posted on deck. It listed the activities scheduled from daybreak to sunset on the Fourth. Bingham was chosen to read the Declaration of Independence, and Ebbets was named a deputy sheriff to help arrest any drunken passengers. His account of the day reads, in part:

Awoke at daybreak by the morning's salute and a serenade [*sic*] from the 'Callithumpian band.' I dressed myself as a *citizen* designing to take no part in the military performance.

At 7 A.M. the Federal Salute was fired, and at the same time the ship's flags were hoisted to the top of every mast. The sight of these flags as they were unfurled by the light breeze, and the volleys of musketry from the different platoons, could not but inspire us with patriotic feelings and we all without an exception resolved to do our best in making the day a day of celebration and festivity

At 10 o'clock, the decks being cleared, the military made their appearance. The N[ew] E[ngland] Regiment, composed of 26 well-armed men commanded by Col. Morgan, looked fine in their black pants, red shirts and brown California Hats, and the Eastabrook Guard dressed in white

30. Ibid., June 14, 1849, 96.

31. Ibid., June 23, 1849, 101-102.

pants, red shirts, and black California Hats presented an imposing appearance . . .

The exercises were finished about 2 P.M. and until dinnertime all was riot and confusion. Our Police were obliged to call up a military force to help them to keep order. But the dinner bell was a better *restaurant*, for all became quiet in their march down to dinner, which was worthy of the occasion and complimentary to the taste of the Cooks and Steward . . . After the removal of the cloth the Poem, or rather address, was delivered by Mr. Browne but did not meet with general satisfaction owing to his sarcastic [a]llusions to some of the passengers present. When finished, the regular toasts were read and were received with much enthusiasm by all. Between each the choir sang an appropriate song. The punch circulated freely and all were in fine spirits . . . Owing to the length of Mr. Browne's address, and to the lateness of the hour, we were forced to withdraw at the moment when we were about to commence the pleasantest part of the dinner, which was the volunteer toasts.

At sunset the flags were struck under a salute of 30 rounds of musketry . . .

The evening's pleasantness was enhanced by a full moon, which seemed to shine with unusual brightness, but most[,] tired and worn out with the arduous duties of the day[,] retired early, after having passed the most exciting day of their lives.³²

In a final entry in his journal, Ebbets wrote:

Sunday August 5th. At daylight when I went up on deck we were within a short distance of the entrance to the bay of San Francisco, going along about 4 knots before a fair wind and with the tide in our favor. Everything about us looked wild and romantic. The water was filled with seals and sea birds, each seeking its morning meal. The headlands looked bold, rugged and rocky to the eye, but with a glass the summits of those bluffs were seen to be covered with a rich foliage on which hundreds of Cattle & Horses were feeding.

After running along these headlands for some ten or twelve miles we entered the "Golden Gate," which is but three-quarters of a mile wide. Its sides rise nearly perpendicularly out of the sea to a great height. On the right hand stands the old Spanish fortification which has since been rebuilt & manned by the government.

After passing the gate, for the first time we had a view of the bay, but the weather was too cloudy for us to see its beauties or extent. Sausilitto (the island of Los Angeles) and the flag staff mount were each passed in a few moments and before I was aware of it (being in my state room dressing) our anchor was dropped in the midst [of] the shipping [lane], within a quarter of a mile from the city. It was then 5 minutes past 9 A.M. and consequently [we] have made the run from Callao in 58 days[,] having been 6 months &

32. Ibid., July 4, 1849, 108-113.

13 days from N.Y. I finished dressing and went on deck. The ship was surrounded by many boats, and all anxious to carry us for 2\$ apiece, but we lowered Bingham's boat and pulled out (just as the 'bulldog face' of Capt. Tibbits was seen over the starboard rail.)³³ We landed amidst a crowd of people and enquired our way—started for the P. office but it was closed. On our way back we met Capt. Bartlett of the *Ewing*, and in company with him attended the Episcopal Church.

By invitation we dined on the *Ewing* and at night returned to our ship satisfied that San Francisco was a dusty, dirty, windy place. It is impossible to give my other impressions. They are too mixed.

On entering the cabin, for the first time since we took such a welcome leave of Capt. T[,] I met him. He appeared very friendly and spoke of my friends whom he had seen in New York. But he appeared the same as ever to me.

In the morning with our tent we went ashore and pitched it on Bingham's land and commenced in earnest our California life.

But I must discontinue my Journal, for in California one has too much to do to spend his time in writing.³⁴

IV. EBBETS IN CALIFORNIA

Ebbets was indeed too busy to continue writing a journal. Facts about his life in California can be found in several San Francisco histories, but of more interest are biographic essays by Charlotte Penniman Ebbets, a daughter by his first marriage. Her essays and a few family letters are part of the Huntington Library's Ebbets Collection.³⁵

Upon leaving the *Pacific* on August 5, 1849, Ebbets camped out in San Francisco's Happy Valley and began looking for a site on which to build a house and a store. Meanwhile, he was selling at great profit some of the merchandise he had brought from New York. The goods included a spring-wagon, still in parts, which sold for \$1,000 even before it could be assembled.³⁶

33. Ibid., August 5, 1849. After he lost command of the *Pacific* and had to return to New York, Captain Tibbits published a pamphlet defending himself and accusing the passengers of misconduct. Restored to command, he took passage on a steamer to Panama, crossed the Isthmus, and secured passage on a ship sailing to San Francisco, arriving there just before the *Pacific* came into port, impatient to again serve as the ship's captain. Schultz, "Gold Rush Voyage of the Ship *Pacific*," 199.

34. Journal, August 5, 1849, [123-125]. (Page numbers were added in pencil to the manuscript. Pages 123-125 are wrongly numbered 110-115.)

35. Charlotte Penniman Ebbets, Arthur's daughter by his first marriage, was a teacher for twenty years. She wrote several biographical sketches of her father and also wrote an essay on the Committee of Vigilance, on which Ebbets served.

36. Charlotte Penniman Ebbets, "I. Arthur's California Life Begins." HM 69678.

With the money he earned, Ebbets bought a waterfront lot (described as mostly mud and tidewater from the Bay). On piles sunk into the mud and with lumber from old packing cases, he put up a 1½-story frame building which came to be known as the Ebbets Hotel. It offered sleeping quarters, luggage storage (at \$1.50 a trunk), and rental space for \$100 a month. Goods for the store were brought by boat directly below the building and lifted through a trapdoor on the lower level. Business proved highly profitable, and Ebbets boasted of making about \$40,000 in 40 days.³⁷

He had formed a company with two partners: Frank Lowe, a relative who had settled in San Francisco, and DeWitt Brown of New York City, who became the firm's Eastern purchasing agent. One unusual item that Brown shipped out was a case of stovepipe hats fashionable in New York. Ebbets was scornful, but his other partner walked down the street wearing one hat and holding one in each hand. He sold all three, as well as the rest of the shipment, and took orders for still more hats.³⁸

Ebbets continued to buy land and build on it. His next purchase was on California Street below Sansome. Here he put up a four-story prefabricated building sent from New York. He now was engaged in the shipping and commission business and purchased an interest in several clipper ships. In 1851 his firm paid \$9,000 for a waterfront lot at California and Front streets and sold half of the property to W. T. Coleman, a leader in the 1851 and 1856 Vigilance Committees, in which Ebbets also was active. On the unsold portion of the property Ebbets erected what is said to be the first granite building in California. Perhaps his greatest real estate bargain was hilltop property for which he paid \$500 at auction in 1852. Here, in 1854 he built one of the first fine residences in San Francisco.³⁹

On a trip to New York in 1853, Ebbets renewed acquaintance with Henry Penniman, whom he had met in San Francisco. Penniman had brought two nieces—Charlotte and Georgiana—from Baltimore to New York to hear Jenny Lind in concert. Ebbets was delighted to learn that the Pennimans planned to continue on to California,

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

"there being a scarcity of the refined type of young women in San Francisco at this early date."⁴⁰

The Pennimans came west by way of Panama. The trip from Chagres to Gorgona, according to Charlotte, was "like a Lord Mayor's Regatta on the River Thames."⁴¹ The rest of the trip was less idyllic, ending in a shipwreck of the steamer taking them from Panama to San Francisco. The passengers were rescued, and arrived in the city without further incident.

When Ebbets returned from New York to San Francisco, he called on the Pennimans and took the sisters on sightseeing trips in his buggy. Soon he proposed to Charlotte, the elder sister, whose serious character was "a balance to his more mercurial nature."⁴² They were married on January 1, 1854, and left immediately for New York, where they spent a year with Arthur's parents while their San Francisco home was under construction. The young couple and their new baby boy returned to California by way of Panama, among the first to cross the Isthmus by railroad. Charlotte graphically described the experience:

I must give you a little account of what a terrible time we had crossing the Isthmus; to be sure we after all came through to Panama *entirely by railroad*, & I suppose ought to be proud to be able to brag of being the first passengers to cross in that way, but still we can remember at the same time it was with numerous frights, & at the risk of our lives. We started in the morning from Aspinwall [Colón City] with cars gaily decked with flags & evergreens, & amid the roaring of cannon, the shouts of the natives, & general hurrahs, & had a very pleasant ride to the "summit" (half way) but found there the heavy rains had broken the road so for two miles we had to stop, & await the train from Panama with the homeward bound passengers, & the baggage, mails, luggage &c of each had to be changed from one to the other & the folks had to walk through a tropical sun this distance—of course all this change took much time, & night came on finding us all on the roadside, with no houses to shelter us but a few bamboo sheds of the natives. About midnight we got seated in the cars, & it was determined to send us on & forward the baggage next morning. Finally we got started. I thought ourselves certainly going through, but had only proceeded two miles when the locomotive ran off the track, & to sit quietly in the cars until morning was our only alternative. . . . The sun was just rising when we took another start, & after considerable alarm from the state of the

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

road we finally reached Panama in safety in time for breakfast. The half of the road from "the summit" (the highest point) to [Panama] is perfectly frightful. It has been hurried on so it is in a very imperfect state. Just imagine some places where the rails are laid on sleepers fastened to posts 80 or 100 ft high & crossing immense gullies where to look down is awful. There are two of these bridges one 400 & the other 600 ft long, & it is the intention to fill in under them, but it will take an age to do it. Our train was a long one & very heavy & when I looked out of the window & heard the poles cracking, & knew the soft nature of the soil, it made me tremble. It is certainly a great work, the greatest of the age considering the deadly climate, marshy wild soil, & the half savage nature of the people.⁴³

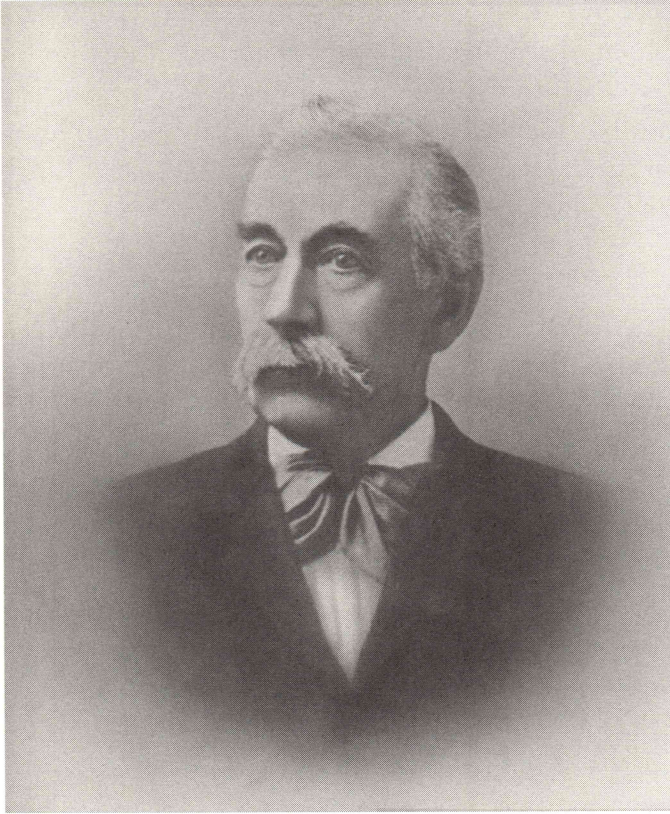
Safely arrived in San Francisco, the family moved into their new, beautifully-furnished, hilltop mansion at Washington and Jones. Good fortune, however, soon deserted them. The San Francisco boom ended with the Panic of 1855, during which some two hundred local businesses failed. The crisis was precipitated by the collapse of Page, Bacon & Company, the leading bankers in the state, and the subsequent collapse of Adams & Company, which provided banking and express services throughout San Francisco.

Ebbets and a partner went into the average-adjusting business, which proved unsuccessful. The chance for a new beginning came with the discovery of gold on the Fraser River, in British Columbia. Ebbets borrowed \$15,000 and bought goods he shipped to Bellingham Bay, where he opened a store he hoped would attract many prospectors as customers. He cleared \$35,000 in thirty-three days, but the Fraser River bubble burst in August 1859. He returned to San Francisco, leaving \$70,000 of goods in the hands of a prominent law firm in Seattle. The goods were redeemed at their proper value, but his land was bought up for delinquent taxes.⁴⁴

Once again Ebbets started a new career, this time as a coal merchant, his occupation for the next forty years. He supplied coal, coke, charcoal, and kindling to retail businesses and to civic and federal institutions. To determine how much coal to stock for the winter, he developed a unique formula. Looking from his window toward the Golden Gate, he would note the amount of fog rolling in from the sea mornings and evenings through the summer months. Much fog would indicate a wet winter and therefore the need to have large

43. Charlotte White Penniman Ebbets, to "Auntie," February 6, 1855. HM 69707.

44. Charlotte Penniman Ebbets, HM 69679. The \$70,000 figure is mentioned in HM 69692.



Portrait of Arthur Mercein Ebbets, San Francisco civic leader. *Courtesy of The Society of California Pioneers.*

amounts of coal on hand. His theory usually proved correct and earned him the name of Ebbets Barometer or the Human Rain Gauge.⁴⁵

In 1863 Charlotte White Penniman Ebbets died, after nine years of marriage, and in 1864 Ebbets married Elizabeth Ann Stevenson. She, too, predeceased her husband. In a mournful summary of his private life he wrote in 1901, "My San Francisco life of nearly fifty-two years has been interspersed with happiness and sorrow. I have buried two wives and three children and have remaining three girls and two boys."⁴⁶ One of those daughters, from his first marriage, was

45. Charlotte Penniman Ebbets, HM 69679.

46. "Statement to the Historical Commission," quoted in Lewis Francis Byington, supervising editor, *The History of San Francisco*, 3 vols. (Chicago & San Francisco: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1931), III: 301.

Charlotte Penniman Ebbets, who preserved her father's journal and compiled biographical information about him.

Ebbets was long active in civic affairs. His daughter testified, "He was a prominent member of all the vigilance committees and did his full share in establishing law and order, which had been well nigh overcome by the strong influx of an element that knew no restrictions."⁴⁷ He was an original stockholder and served several times as president and director of the Mercantile Library Association, which built a library praised by *Harpers Weekly* as the finest library building of its kind in the world. One of his chief concerns following the 1868 earthquake was to make sure that the library was safe.⁴⁸

Ebbets served also as president of the Society of California Pioneers, president of the Sportsmen's Club of California, and vice-president of the Pacific Yacht Club, and he was a founder of the Firemen's Fund Association, one of the insurance companies that met its obligations after the fire of 1906. In addition to these activities he held several political positions. In 1861 he was elected on the People's Ticket as County Recorder, and in 1867 he became Deputy Assessor. During a term as Supervisor of the Fourth Ward, he served on the finance committee and on a group considering the need for municipal ownership of the water supply. For a period of forty-eight hours he even served as mayor of San Francisco, following the death of the incumbent, James Otis. An ardent Republican, Ebbets was proud of having attended the first Republican convention held in the county.⁴⁹

Ebbets retired from business in 1896. In 1901 he sold his San Francisco home and moved to Alameda. There he died on August 5, 1903, at the age of seventy-three. He was remembered as a "notable pioneer figure . . . altogether one of the most progressive type of citizens, the kind who made possible the development of the community in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties."⁵⁰ As Ebbets expressed it, "I think I have done my share of work to help along our city."⁵¹

47. Ibid., 302; quote is from *The Bay of San Francisco* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1892), 514.

48. Charlotte Penniman Ebbets, HM 69684.

49. *The History of San Francisco*, III: 300.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., 301.

SAN DIEGO, GUARDIAN OF THE AMERICAN PACIFIC

By John S. Harrel

ABSTRACT: San Diego did not easily become the home port of America's Pacific fleet. It was two decades after the US acquisition of the Philippines, Guam, and Hawai'i before a combination of imperialist naval strategy, Japanese expansionism, the Great White Fleet, unrest in Mexico and Central America, the completion of the Panama Canal, the Panama-California Exposition, a supportive congressman, and energetic civic leadership coalesced on the issue. Together, these factors led to the establishment of major naval facilities in this southern California city.

Keywords: San Diego navy facilities; Pacific naval strategy; American Pacific

On the morning of May 1, 1898, the American Asiatic Squadron, led by the armored cruiser USS *Olympia*, bore down on the Spanish warships anchored off the city of Manila. Commodore George Dewey (1837–1917), on the bridge of the USS *Olympia*, gazed into the early morning nautical twilight as the outlines of the Spanish warships slowly materialized. Dewey calmly turned to Captain Vernon Gridley (1844–1898), commander of the USS *Olympia*, and stated: “You may fire when ready, Gridley.”¹ These simple words launched America’s “Hail Mary play” for empire. When Dewey signaled cease-fire the Spanish Asiatic Squadron was destroyed and America was a world imperial power. Despite

1. George Dewey, *Autobiography of George Dewey, Admiral of the Navy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 191.

historian Gray Brechin's generalizations, the extension of the United States as a major military power in the Pacific Ocean was not a foregone conclusion.² It would be at least twenty years before the United States started to develop Pacific ports and naval bases that could support a Pacific fleet for the purpose of protecting America's colonial ventures in the Pacific.³ How San Diego was chosen to serve as the guardian of America's Pacific is the subject of this article.

In 1900, the port cities of the American Pacific Coast were underdeveloped compared to East Coast ports. Civic leaders, envisioning the economic boost that a bustling harbor could provide to their city, were actively seeking economic support to develop their port, in competition with other West Coast cities. National strategic factors have tremendous potential to influence the process of port, and thus urban, development. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, California's civic leaders recognized the new strategic position of the United States as Dewey's victory catapulted the United States from a regional to a world power. As the US Navy expanded its presence in the Pacific, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego competed to become the home port for a new Pacific fleet. Although San Diego was a smaller city and its harbor entrance too shallow, civic leaders engaged in political maneuvers and offered enticements that convinced the Navy to establish the Pacific Fleet's home port in San Diego. Events around the Pacific added weight to San Diego's claim.

2. Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 130–134.

3. "Fortification of Our Coast," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1904; Joseph Wilson, "The Rise of Japan; Defend the Coast! Some Lessons for the Far East War Which America Should Take to Heart—Imperative Need of Pacific Coast Fortifications," *Los Angeles Times*, October 9, 1904; Captain A.P. Niblack, USN, "Naval Stations and Bases Needed by Our Fleet: It Means Spending Millions . . .," *New York Times*, February 4, 1917; "Apparent Scare over Jap Controversy: Strong Fleet for Pacific Is a Port," *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1909.

Although Mare Island was founded around 1853 in northern San Francisco Bay, it was for a navy only beginning to transition from sail to steam warships. For the second half of the 19th century, it supported the small Pacific Squadron of Civil War-era, shallow-draft, sail and steam, wooden warships and modern (1880–1890) shallow-draft, steel, coastal defense battleships and monitors. Mare Island could not be adapted for the new steel, ocean-going navy being launched in the 1890s. The silt from the Sacramento River keeps the region shallow and would require constant dredging. The navy should have built facilities farther south in the bay proper. Based upon strictly military consideration, that is where the naval shore facilities for the new Pacific Fleet should have been constructed. After the period of this paper, the fleet expanded beyond the expectations of the naval planners of the early 20th century: Naval Air Station Alameda Island and Navy Base Treasure Island were both built on fill in the bay and other naval facilities followed. They are almost all gone now, for lack of political will to keep a navy presence.

An abundance of primary and secondary sources is available to trace the development of San Diego as the home port for the Pacific Fleet. The civic leadership of California during this time (1900–1920) was well informed regarding the political and economic opportunities that Admiral Dewey dropped into their lap. It is interesting to ponder how America's emerging national military strategy supplemented local civic leaders' efforts, resulting in the urban development of San Diego. We might ask: What military factors influenced the development of Pacific naval ports in general and San Diego in particular? How did the Great White Fleet's visit to San Diego influence support for a Navy base there? And, finally, what role did San Diego's Chamber of Commerce play in San Diego's rise as a military metropolis?

KEY PLAYERS

Any discussion of American military strategy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries must begin with Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914) of the United States Navy. Mahan was one of the most influential strategists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Though a lackluster sailor, he was a prolific writer, publishing numerous books and articles on naval strategy and American imperialism. In 1890 he published *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660–1783*.⁴ This best-selling work so impressed Kaiser Wilhelm II that he had it translated into German and invited then-Captain Mahan to meet with him in 1899 at The Hague.⁵ For nations involved in imperialist expansion, Mahan's books provided a kind of gospel for the development of naval policy; they were diligently studied not only by the German Navy but also the fledgling Japanese Navy.⁶ He was a friend of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge and his works influenced the men who would catapult the United States from a second-rate regional power in the 1890s to a world power with a colonial empire in 1898, starting the United States on course to control the world's oceans.⁷

4. Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783* (New York: Dover Publications, 1987, reprint of original 5th edition, 1894).

5. "Kaiser Wants to See Mahan," *Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 1899.

6. Allan Westcott, ed., *On Naval Warfare, Selections from the Writings of Rear Admiral Alfred T. Mahan* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1942), xiv–xvii.

7. For a summary of Mahan's life, see Kevin Baker, "The Prophet of Sea Power," *Military History* (March 2012): 58–65.

Admiral of the Navy George Dewey (1837-1917) was a fighting sailor with political and diplomatic skills. Ten days after the sinking of the *Maine* in Havana harbor and eight weeks before the president declared war, Dewey received secret orders from Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt:

WASHINGTON, February 25, 1898

DEWEY, Hongkong:

Secret and confidential. Order the squadron, except *Monocacy*, to Hongkong. Keep full of coal. In event of declaration of war [with] Spain, your duty will be to see that the Spanish squadron does not leave the Asiatic coast, and then [conduct] offensive operations in Philippine Islands . . .

ROOSEVELT.⁸

Roosevelt's order and Dewey's professionalism, aggressive combat style, and luck propelled the United States to the status of a world imperial power twenty years before it had developed the ability to defend its new Pacific colonies from military threats.⁹ As Admiral of the Navy, Dewey fought the political battles to build a fleet and naval infrastructure at home and abroad for the defense and extension of America's colonial and economic worldwide empire. His autobiography provides insight into the man who laid the foundations for the modern Navy and whose victory led to the creation of the military-industrial complex in San Diego.¹⁰

San Diego Congressman William Kettner (1864-1930) deserves much of the credit for diverting the Navy from San Francisco and Los Angeles to San Diego. He describes his actions in his book, *Why It Was Done and How*.¹¹ Elected to Congress in 1912, he served four terms and left office in 1921. Kettner worked closely with the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce to entice the Navy, Army, and Marine Corps to expand their presence in San Diego.¹² By the time

8. 55th Congress, 3rd Session, *Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the year 1898*. Appendix to the Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1898), 66-67.

9. "Fortification of Our Coast," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1904; Wilson, "The Rise of Japan"; Niblack, "Naval Stations and Bases Needed by Our Fleet"; "Apparent Scare over Jap Controversy: Strong Fleet for Pacific Is a Port," 1.

10. Dewey, *Autobiography*, 244-254, 273-275.

11. William Kettner, *Why It Was Done and How* (San Diego: Frye & Smith, 1923).

12. The San Diego Chamber of Commerce recognized the potential benefit of courting the Navy in their development plan as early as 1900. Today, the San Diego Region Chamber of Commerce maintains its archives for the 1900-1925 period in a private collection in their corporate headquarters. The archive contains minutes of board meetings, committee reports, and official

Kettner retired from Congress, he had secured Navy, Marine, and Army bases in San Diego and had laid the foundation to make San Diego America's "Guardian of the Pacific."¹³

STRATEGIC CONCERNS IN THE PACIFIC

With the annexation of Hawai'i and the defeat of Spain in the Philippines in 1898, America extended its interests to the far side of the Pacific. Captain (later Admiral) Alfred Thayer Mahan propounded America's need for empire at the close of the nineteenth century. Mahan argued that a nation's economy and security depended upon the unhindered flow of maritime commerce upon the world's oceans. The protection of commerce is a primary strategic interest of a nation-state, he declared. Therefore "command of the sea" and control of the world's oceans ought to transcend what Mahan referred to as the "petty political bickering" between legislative and executive branches.¹⁴

Achieving "command of the sea" or command of a specific geographic body of water, according to Mahan, required the concentration of a battleship fleet superior to that of any prospective rival. The American and Spanish application of this principle explains why Dewey and Spanish Admiral Montojo were unsupported in the western Pacific during the Spanish-American War. Both the main Spanish and American fleets were fighting each other in the Atlantic. Neither navy was strong enough to dispatch battleships or armored cruisers to the Pacific and still maintain a reasonable chance of success in the main theater of the war. In point of fact the battleship USS *Oregon* had to make a 14,000-mile cruise from San Francisco to Key West to reinforce the American battle fleet operating in the Caribbean under Rear Admiral William Sampson's command, leaving Dewey, days after his triumph over the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, to face

correspondence from prominent civil and military leaders of the time. These records verify the events recorded in Kettner's book.

13. Some of the records for the development of the United States Navy between 1901 and 1925 in the San Diego area are found within the 11th Naval District records deposited in the United States National Archives in Riverside County, California. With the exception of the Navy's San Diego Coaling Station between 1904 and 1911, these records are incomplete. The operational records of the Navy's ships on the Pacific coast between 1900 and 1920 are held at the Naval Yard in Washington D.C. and to a limited extent online at the Naval History and Heritage homepage. Pictures and general histories of most of the ships mentioned in this article can found on this homepage.

14. Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, 25-89.

a German challenge which was fully supported by the superior Imperial German Asiatic Armored Cruiser Squadron. The arrival of French, British, and Japanese warships defused the German threat but highlighted the fact that a number of ambitious imperialist powers were trolling the Pacific looking for opportunities.¹⁵

America's fleet in 1899 could not simultaneously protect its interest in the Pacific and its interests 10,000 miles away in the Atlantic and Caribbean. The voyage of the USS *Oregon* underscored the importance of securing an isthmus canal. In this period prior to the 1914 completion of the Panama Canal, American battleships would have to steam almost 21,000 miles to reach Manila Bay from the Atlantic Coast. This was a significant strategic problem of time and distance, especially in the face of the rapid naval build-ups by Japan and Germany in this period.

In the early 1900s, America had a problem similar to that of Imperial Russia. Both nations had underdeveloped Pacific coastal cities and ports; however, deployment of their fleets differed considerably. Russia divided its new steel navy between its Baltic and Asiatic fleets, while the United States massed the majority of its battleships and armored cruisers in the Atlantic, maintaining only small cruiser squadrons in the eastern and western Pacific.

In 1904, Japan conducted a surprise torpedo-boat attack that damaged and trapped the Russian Asian fleet in its harbor at Port Arthur, Russia's Manchurian naval base. (See Map 1.) Russian reinforcements from the Baltic sailed 20,000 miles but were destroyed at the Battle of Tsushima Strait before they could reach their Asian destination. For lack of a naval base south of besieged Port Arthur, the Russian Baltic fleet was defeated and scattered, and its ships were

15. The battle of Manila, in which Dewey vanquished the Spanish Pacific fleet, took place on May 1, 1898. Dewey sent a dispatch ship to Hong Kong with the news of his victory. On May 2, the British warship *Linnet*, arrived in Manila Bay. On May 5, the French warship *Brioux* arrived. On May 6, the German warship *Irene* arrived and ignored signals to anchor near the American warships. On May 9, the German warship *Cormorant* arrived and would not comply with signals until the Americans fired a shot over her bow. On June 12, the commander of the German Asiatic Squadron arrived on the armored cruiser *Kaiser*, followed by three other armored cruisers, two other light cruisers, and 1200 naval infantry troops. A Japanese ship arrived in June. The American squadron, consisting of four cruisers, two gunboats, one revenue cutter, and two supply ships, was out-classed and out-gunned by the Germans. Dewey's diplomatic skills and the support of the neutral British and Japanese warships prevented conflict. Dewey, *Autobiography*, 266–267; Nathan Sargent, Cmdr. USN, *Admiral Dewey and the Manila Campaign* (Washington, DC: National Historical Foundation, 1947 [Manuscript written in 1904]), 73–74; Terrell D. Gottschall, *By Order of the Kaiser* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 134–180.

hunted down and destroyed. Only three of the forty-one ships of Russia's Baltic fleet reached the safety of their port at Vladivostok. This Japanese victory demonstrated the importance of advance naval bases in support of naval operations. In 1904, California's port cities, like Port Arthur, could not be quickly reinforced by the American fleet stationed in the Atlantic.

The defense of the Pacific Coast in general, and California in particular, and the protection of American interests in the Pacific and Asia depended upon three factors. First, America had to deploy a battleship fleet in the Pacific capable of defeating the Japanese Navy. Second, America had to develop naval bases with coal supplies, machine shops, and drydocks to support the steam-powered fleet on the Pacific coast of the Americas and in strategically located Pacific colonies. Third, the United States assumed control of the Panama Canal's construction in 1904. While the canal would facilitate naval deployment as well as trade between the Atlantic and the Pacific, the protection of this important through-way would be an extra charge to military forces stationed in the vicinity. Mahan recognized that America's military and economic policies during this period were shaped by "the Monroe Doctrine, the Panama Canal, the Hawaiian Islands, markets in China and the exposure of the Pacific Coast, with its meager population, insufficiently developed resources, and somewhat turbulent attitude toward Asiatic [immigrants]."¹⁶ The question was simply where to put the Pacific naval bases.

Mahan realized that America's Pacific colonies and its Pacific Coast had a limited number of commercial ports suitable for a fleet when compared to the Atlantic Coast. Assuming the American battle fleet was concentrated in the Atlantic, but the war was in the Pacific, the loss of a single naval station on the Pacific Coast or in the Pacific colonies before the fleet arrived would have been catastrophic.¹⁷ One of the first national discussions was whether to place an advance naval base in the western Pacific at Subic Bay, Philippines, or in the central Pacific at Hawai'i. The outcome of the Russo-Japanese War

16. Alfred T. Mahan (II), *Naval Strategy*, 1910. A series of lectures published by Admiral Mahan in 1910 and republished in 1991 of the United States Marine Corps, Quantico, VA., 437.

17. Mahan (II), *Naval Strategy*, 1910, 437. In a war with Japan that did not include European powers on the American side, neutrality treaties would close the British and German ports to the American Navy. In that case, the loss of Manila would make it impossible for the American fleet to operate in the western Pacific; the loss or destruction of a naval base on the Pacific Coast would prevent the American fleet from operating in the eastern Pacific.

(1904–1905) convinced the United States, for strategic and budgetary reasons, to place the advance base in Hawai‘i.¹⁸ America’s Pacific Coast in 1910, like Russia’s in 1904, had only two naval bases: San Francisco and Puget Sound.¹⁹ Like the Russian Baltic fleet, the American Atlantic fleet, until the completion of the isthmian canal, was outside supporting range of the Philippines or the American Pacific Coast. The advantages America had in the central and western Pacific were that she controlled Hawai‘i, Guam, American Samoa, the Philippines, and other islands where coaling stations could be established, and two of them, Hawai‘i and the Philippines, had the potential to be developed into full-scale naval bases.

By the early 1900s, Mahan had adjusted his earlier general conclusion that “concentration of the battle fleet” was essential and started advocating that the United States needed effective naval forces in both the Atlantic and Pacific. Most likely, this change in Mahan’s “theory of concentration” was due to America’s geopolitical situation after the Spanish-American War. Unlike armies that sit on the locations to be protected, the fleets Mahan envisioned would protect the American coast and Pacific colonies by controlling the sea approaches to these locations. The projected isthmian canal changed the geopolitical formula for the defense of the United States and her possessions. These proposed fleets were not so much for the defense of the American coast as for the protection of the projected isthmian canal and the resulting increased commerce with the Far East. Mahan anticipated that an enemy force would be able to easily interdict this artificial route, preventing transfer of naval units from one ocean to the other.²⁰ A foreign power’s commercial base on the Pacific coast of the Americas, such as at Magdalena Bay, Baja California, Mexico, would pose a significant threat to the canal.

The naval bases Mahan envisioned would perform three traditional functions: supply, repair, and defense of the fleet. To be effective, the naval bases would have to be close to the theater of operation, secured from land and sea threats, close to the sources

18. William R. Braisted, “The Philippine Naval Base Problem, 1898–1909,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 41, no. 1 (June 1954): 21–40; See also Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897–1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991).

19. Mahan (II), *Naval Strategy*, 320.

20. Alfred T. Mahan, *The Problem of Asia and Its Effect upon International Policies* (Boston: Little Brown, and Company, 1900), 181–182.

of supply, near population centers, and located in a navigable harbor.²¹ Mahan recommended that each coast should have primary and alternate naval bases.²² Both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts required adequate fortification, including gun batteries, torpedo boats, and a garrison to prevent an enemy from establishing control.²³ In California, there were only three locations suitable for naval bases: San Francisco, San Pedro, and San Diego.

THE RISING SUN, THE CANAL, AND WEST COAST HARBORS
The vulnerability of the Pacific Coast was well articulated by journalist Joseph Wilson in an article in the *Los Angeles Times* on October 9, 1904, entitled "The Rise of Japan; Defend the Coast!"²⁴ Wilson reviewed Japan's successful wars with China and Russia.²⁵ He argued that with Russia's defeat the balance of power in the Pacific had been disturbed. Due to America's unfortified Pacific coast and limited naval forces in the Pacific, the Japanese fleet, especially its torpedo boats, posed a threat to America's West Coast. Wilson argued that, based on their success against Russia, Japan would likely take advantage of American unpreparedness and develop plans to seize the Hawaiian Islands in order to paralyze America's West Coast commerce. His warning included a prophecy that, unless America took the Japanese threat seriously, "our rivalry with Japan for the shipping business of the Pacific is bound to be one sided, and Japan will inevitably beat us."²⁶

Wilson then provided a survey of America's current military situation on the Pacific Coast and his opinions and recommendations for its defense. He identified the need for a naval base and analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of each location. San Francisco, California, and Puget Sound, Washington, suffered from the same disadvantage: weather. (See Map 1.) Both locations suffer from severe winter storms and fog. Both have wet and cold winters, and their

21. Mahan (II), *Naval Strategy*, 433–434.

22. *Ibid.*, 195–196.

23. *Ibid.*, 54.

24. Wilson, "The Rise of Japan."

25. First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905).

26. As with the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 and World War II, Japan opened the war with Russia without warning when her torpedo-boat flotilla attacked the Russian Far East fleet at anchor in Port Arthur, Manchuria, China, without issuing a formal declaration of war.

coasts are lashed by violent storms. Puget Sound has the additional disadvantage of being 1400 sailing miles north of San Diego, too far to protect the projected isthmian canal.²⁷ Wilson contended that Mare Island (San Francisco) Naval Yard could never economically be fitted to receive a modern fleet.

The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce had struggled to develop San Pedro into a protected commercial harbor. Starting in 1898, the Army Corps of Engineers dredged the harbor and constructed a breakwater to create the largest man-made harbor in the world. It would become "a great commercial port" when it was completed, Wilson believed.²⁸

He concluded, however, that San Diego was the ideal location for a naval base "second to none."²⁹ It was the only major Pacific port free from storm and fog and the climate was neither too hot nor too cold. The harbor was excellent and when dredged would be able to accommodate the new large battleships. The cost of living was low, and there were less acute labor problems than were then plaguing San Francisco. When the isthmian canal was completed, San Diego would be the closest American port of call on the Pacific Coast. Wilson provided a game plan for a naval base at San Diego and encouraged Southern Californians to support his plan. First, the San Diego harbor needed to be dredged. Second, a naval yard with docks large enough for modern battleships should be built in San Diego. Additionally, San Francisco needed a naval dock where disabled battleships could be repaired, and Los Angeles and San Diego needed to obtain more satisfactory rail connections with the East.³⁰ Finally, each of the Pacific ports required modern fortifications.³¹

27. To understand Wilson's arguments, it needs to be understood that coal-powered warships had a maximum operating range of 4,000 miles. Since battle speeds greatly reduced that range, navy captains felt it unwise to drop below 50 per cent of bunker capacity.

28. Wilson, "The Rise of Japan." As it happened, when the battleship fleet was shifted to the Pacific in 1922, San Pedro was the only port large enough for twenty battleships to anchor. As a result, the battleships' home port was San Pedro and Long Beach between the 1920s and 1941.

29. Ibid.

30. San Diego did not have transcontinental rail connections until after 1907. Prior to that time, San Diego had only limited rail service via a side track connected through San Bernardino. James N. Price, "The Railroad Stations of San Diego County," *San Diego Historical Society Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (Spring 1988), accessed July 23, 2012, <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/88spring/railroad.htm>.

31. Ibid.

Despite Wilson's warning (and acknowledgement of Japan's exemplary strategic preparation), America's sympathies were with Japan against Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). In 1898, in the aftermath of the Battle of Manila Bay, a Japanese warship had arrayed itself alongside British warships in support of Dewey when it appeared that the German Asiatic Squadron might side with Spain.³² Yet, an outbreak of anti-Japanese activism in San Francisco in 1905 led to an international incident which, along with the extensive damage to San Francisco's infrastructure from the 1906 earthquake and fire, served as wake-up calls for US Navy planners who may have been considering San Francisco the leading candidate for a Pacific fleet's home port. San Diego's civic leaders were already working on the solution.³³

SAN DIEGO ACTIVISM

Years before US acquisition of the Panama Canal route and before Wilson wrote his article, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce (hereafter Chamber) reached the same conclusion as Wilson: San Diego should become a naval base.³⁴ San Diego's civic leaders faced the challenging task of developing their agricultural town and secondary port into a modern, commercial, maritime city. They recognized the potential economic benefit to their city of a canal across Central America. These civic leaders also recognized that, if their port

32. Foster Haily and Milton Lancelot, *Clear for Action* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1964), 72–73. One of the German warships protected a Spanish Army outpost from Filipino forces and evacuated the Spanish soldiers and their families in what, today, would be regarded as a humanitarian rescue by a German officer exceeding his orders. At the time, the German action was construed as possibly siding with Spain or as a means of advancing German claims at the later peace negotiations.

33. William R. Braisted, "The Philippine Naval Base Problem, 1898–1909," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 41, no. 1 (June 1954), 21–40; See also Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan 1897–1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991).

In February 1905, the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran a series of anti-Japanese articles that sparked two years of violence against Japanese immigrants. The San Francisco school board passed a resolution announcing its intent to order Japanese students to attend the segregated Chinese school. On April 18, 1906, in the midst of this domestic crisis, an earthquake and fire destroyed much of San Francisco's infrastructure, delaying the school board's implementation of its resolution until October 1906. This treatment of the Japanese minority violated the 1894 treaty between Japan and the United States and was viewed by Japan as an insult to its national pride and honor. President Theodore Roosevelt quieted the international crisis with his Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907. David Brudnoys, "Race and the San Francisco School Board Incident: Contemporary Evaluation," *California History Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (September 1971), 302–304.

34. John Martin, "The San Diego Chamber of Commerce Established the U.S. Coaling Station, 1900–1912, San Diego's First Permanent Naval Facility," *The Journal of San Diego History* 56, no. 2 (Fall 2010), 217–221.

were to attract the largest commercial ships, their harbor would have to be dredged. Being situated a few miles north of the unguarded Mexican border, with no natural defenses, they also realized that San Diego's fortifications needed to be modernized.

In January 1900, the Chamber passed a number of resolutions and submitted petitions to Congress to help achieve these goals. First, the Chamber's board on January 12, 1900, passed a resolution in favor of a Nicaraguan Canal. Second, on January 19, 1900, the board drafted an act for the authorization of \$219,000 to dredge a suitable channel across the sand bar to admit deep draft vessels into the harbor of San Diego. Then on January 15 and 19, 1900, the board discussed and endorsed a plan of the New York Chamber of Commerce to increase the Army's Coast Defense Artillery Corps from 9,702 to 19,404. This increase would have provided San Diego with 141 men and increased San Francisco's garrison to 1,998 and Puget Sound's garrison to 1,414.³⁵ Also in 1900, the Chamber established a plan to develop their city in concert with the Army and Navy. The establishment of a naval base and improved coast defense would be primary goals for the growth of the city from 1900 to 1924. From 1900, the Chamber utilized sophisticated lobbying tactics, working directly with congressional representatives and military officers while rallying public support to achieve these goals.

During the period of 1900–1912, the Chamber's lobbying efforts to attract military facilities were hampered by the need to dredge and deepen San Diego Bay's harbor mouth. Shortly after discussing the draft act for dredging the harbor, the Chamber received a telegram on February 9, 1900, from Admiral Albert Kautz inquiring whether it was safe to bring the USS *Iowa* into harbor.³⁶ There is no record of the USS *Iowa*, a deep-draft armored cruiser, entering the harbor, but smaller American and German warships entered the harbor, and their officers interacted with Chamber board members. Despite the limitation caused by the shallow harbor mouth, the Navy supported the establishment of a coaling station at San Diego because warships of modest size could use the port.³⁷ In February 1901, Chamber board

35. San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce (hereafter SDRCOC) Minutes and attachments of the Board Meetings for the month of January 1900, vol. 1900.

36. SDRCOC, Telegram, date February 9, 1900, vol. 1900.

37. SDRCOC, Letter from Mr. Bradford, dated April 26, 1900, vol. 1900, 127.

members traveled to Washington, DC, and convinced Admiral R. B. Bradford to support the establishment of a coaling station and also to establish a torpedo-boat flotilla on the Pacific Coast and station it in San Diego. Key to their sales pitch was San Diego's climate and ocean conditions.³⁸

In 1902, the Chamber focused on obtaining the naval coaling station and a defense post, along with the dredging of the harbor.³⁹ In February 1902, the USS *Philadelphia* touched bottom entering the harbor, and in April the USS *Iowa* visited the city but anchored outside the harbor.⁴⁰ In September 1902, Fort Rosecrans was approved for a two-company post, but the Chamber continued lobbying for a larger coast defense establishment.⁴¹

By 1904, the naval coaling station was completed, and the Chamber supported a bill in Congress to convert Point Loma Quarantine Station into a naval base. (See Map 2.)

On November 6, 1906, Chairman Ackerman reported to the Chamber that Senator George C. Perkins of California, Chairman of the Senate Fortifications Committee, had toured Point Loma and agreed to support San Diego's request for a battery of four twelve-inch guns. During 1906, the Chamber followed up this success by passing resolutions, forwarded to their congressional representatives, for dredging the harbor and establishing a naval base in San Diego.⁴²

San Diego was not alone in courting the military to establish local bases. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce was actively attempting to convince Congress to fortify its port of San Pedro. In an article published on October 12, 1904, the *Los Angeles Times* reviewed the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce's efforts and then discussed the strength and weakness of the fortifications along the Pacific Coast. The *Times* considered only San Francisco adequately defended with coastal fortifications; it judged San Diego's defenses inadequate to resist a determined attack. The unidentified author described a hypothetical attack by Japan to prove his point. San Diego's weak fortifications but good harbor could be quickly captured and used as a base

38. SDRCOC, Minutes of Board meeting, February 8, 1901, vol. 1901, 281-282.

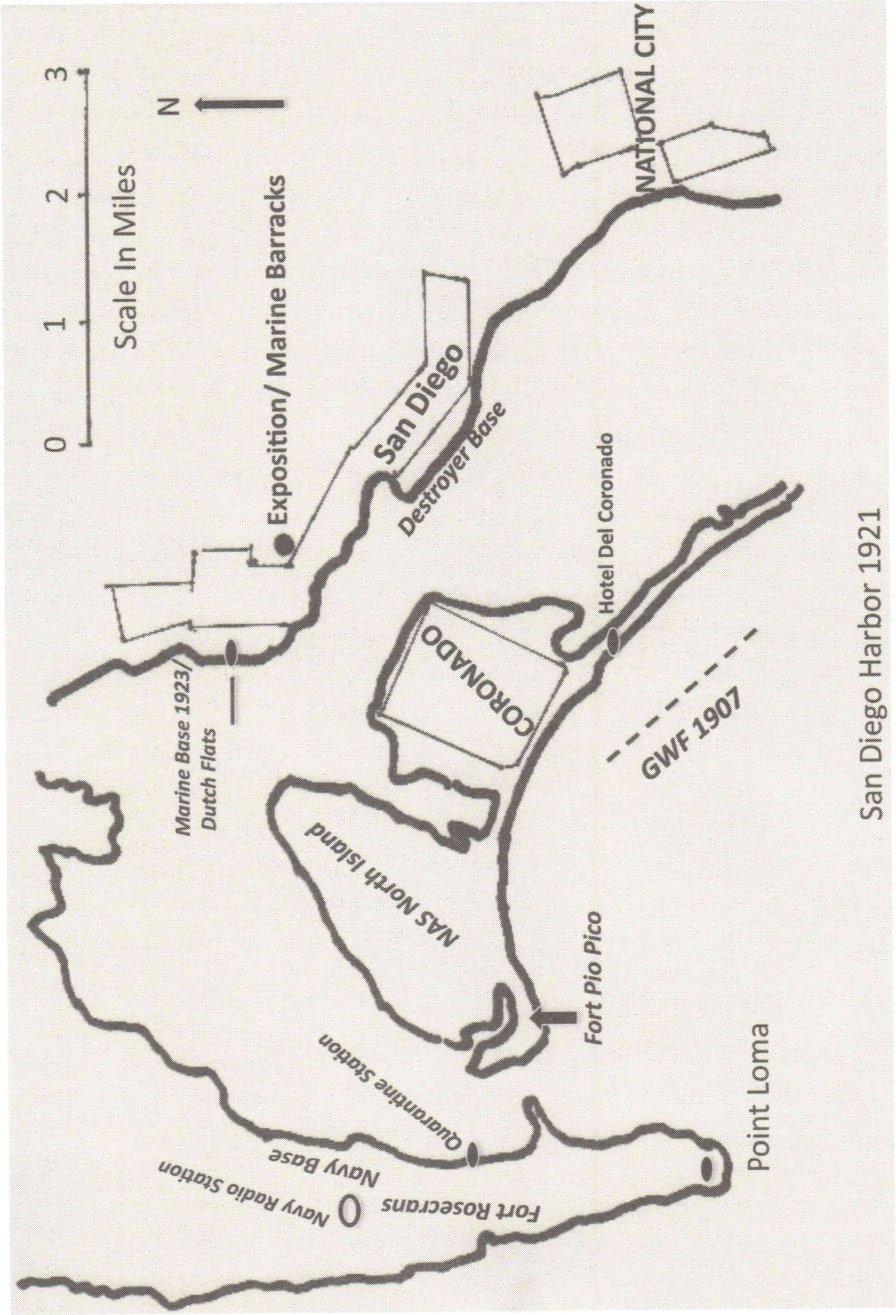
39. Martin, "San Diego Chamber of Commerce," 218-224.

40. SDRCOC, Minutes of Board Meetings and Correspondence, February-April 1902, vol. 1902.

41. SDRCOC, Minutes of Board Meetings, September 26, 1902, vol. 1902.

42. SDRCOC, Minutes of Board Meetings and Correspondence, 1906, vol. 1906, 475, 517.

Map 2. San Diego's military facilities, 1921. Based on the US Army Corps of Engineers map of San Diego Harbor California, dated June 29, 1921, Coast Defense Study Group, U.S. Pacific Coast, <http://www.cdsg.org/pacific.htm>.



of operations by Japan. The author's primary argument was in support of defense appropriations for San Pedro, but he also chided the War Department for its failure to appreciate the value of San Diego or to improve its defenses.⁴³

THE GREAT WHITE FLEET

In the spring of 1906, during the international crisis over the exclusion of Japanese students from San Francisco's schools, there were indications that Japan was strengthening her fleet and that Japanese military leaders believed they could successfully defeat American interests in the Pacific. The Office of Naval Intelligence reported evidence of Japanese fleet modernization and orders to European shipyards for dreadnought-class battleships and other armored warships.⁴⁴ Admiral Dewey calculated that it would take ninety days to conduct an emergency redeployment from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast, and in that time Japan could have captured the Philippines and Honolulu. While the school crisis was defused, it prompted Dewey to recommend to President Roosevelt that he dispatch the battleship fleet to Asia. Such a move would have many international and political objectives and send a clear message to the world that America was a modern naval power. On December 16, 1907, America's Great White Fleet of sixteen battleships, accompanied by support ships, steamed out of Chesapeake Bay and turned south toward the Straits of Magellan and the Pacific Ocean.⁴⁵

On November 15, 1907, the Navy replied to the Chamber's invitation for the Great White Fleet to visit San Diego. The Navy informed the Chamber that the Pathfinder Fleet would conduct a port of call at San Diego.⁴⁶ This was a squadron of three modern cruisers (the USS *Tennessee*, *Washington*, and *California*) that preceded the Great White Fleet.⁴⁷ In December 1907, the Chamber received a letter pledging congressional support for the formation of a commission to

43. "Fortification of Our Coast," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1904, 6.

44. Britain's HMS *Dreadnought*, launched in 1906, was the first modern battleship with a primary battery of ten big 12-inch naval rifles. She outclassed all American battleships until the USS *Delaware* was launched in 1909.

45. Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 492–503. It took the Great White Fleet from December 16, 1907 to February 22, 1909 to complete the cruise.

46. The "Pathfinder Fleet" was a group of cruisers that preceded the Great White Fleet.

47. "Cruisers' Trip to the Pacific," *Washington Post*, October 2, 1907; "Open All Three for Visitors," *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1908.

study the advantages of San Diego as a naval base.⁴⁸ After all their efforts to court the Navy, civic leaders were dismayed to learn in the spring of 1908 that America's Great White Fleet would not make a port call in San Diego. The three pathfinder cruisers reached San Diego by March 16, 1908, anchoring off Coronado Beach near the historic Del Coronado Hotel.⁴⁹ (See Map 2.)

A determined civic delegation led by Mayor John Forward and Colonel D.C. Collier sailed from San Diego on the steamer *SS St. Denis* to meet with the commander of the Great White Fleet, Rear Admiral R.D. Evans, at Magdalena Bay, Baja California, Mexico. The *San Diego Union's* reporter with the fleet observed that the natural features of Magdalena Bay made it an ideal location for a naval base.⁵⁰ The United States government had leased the bay from Mexico for naval gunnery training. While Magdalena Bay was an ideal anchorage for the entire Great White Fleet and had the potential to be developed into a naval base, its isolated location and the instability of the Mexican government made such improvements a questionable investment for the United States. On March 16, 1908, Mayor Forward telegraphed San Diego that their mission was successful and the fleet would make a San Diego port of call between April 12 and 15, 1908.⁵¹

On March 17, 1908, the *San Diego Union* reported that, on the contrary, the fleet would not enter San Diego Bay. An unnamed admiral had informed the reporter that the only port where sixteen battleships could anchor was Puget Sound. The mayor's delegation unsuccessfully tried to convince Admiral Evans to steam all or part of the fleet into San Diego Bay. But the battleships drew twenty-seven to twenty-nine feet and could not chance the sand bar at the mouth of the bay. However, the admirals told the reporter they were impressed with the potential of San Diego as a naval station, and Admiral Thomas spoke about establishing a naval training station in San Diego.⁵²

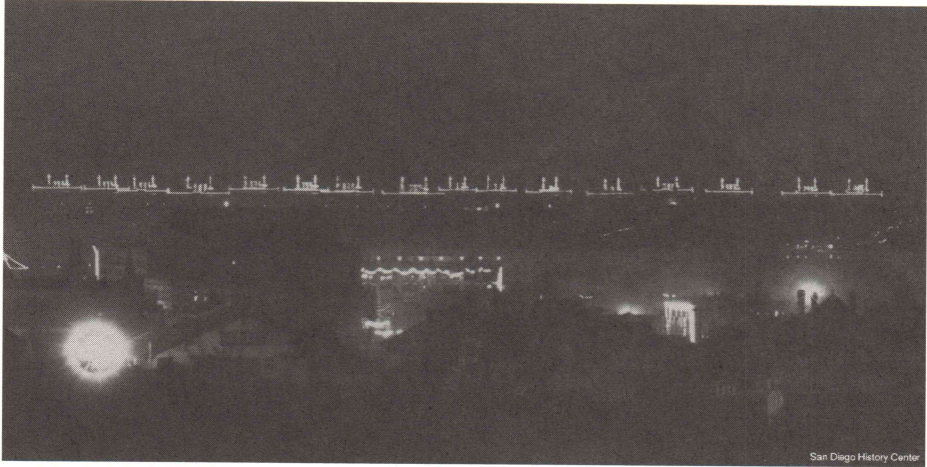
48. SDRCOC, Reply to Invitation to the Pathfinder Fleet, dated November 15, 1907, and Reply to Letter, dated December 12, 1907, vol. 1908.

49. "Fleet Here Apr. 12 to 15, Says Mayor," *San Diego Union*, March 16, 1908.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.



Night view of the Great White Fleet anchored off Coronado Beach, 1908.
San Diego History Center (#919).

On or about April 13, 1908, the battleships anchored outside the harbor off Coronado Beach. The sailors and marines received their month's pay before "liberty call" was sounded, releasing them and \$250,000 onto the economy of San Diego.⁵³ The churches of San Diego made an unsuccessful bid to close the saloons, which the mayor and city council addressed but wisely did not act upon.⁵⁴ Admiral Evans was rushed to Paso Robles Hot Springs for treatment of his inflammatory rheumatism. The festivities included a parade of sailors and marines followed by ceremonies, dinner parties, and other events.⁵⁵ While the newspapers did not record how much of the \$250,000 the fleet spent on "liberty," it would have been considerable. The fleet also stopped at San Pedro, Santa Barbara, and San Francisco.⁵⁶ At San Pedro-Long Beach and at Santa Barbara, the ships had to anchor off-shore as they had at Coronado.

After the departure of the fleet, the Chamber and city of San Diego were reinvigorated in their efforts to establish San Diego as a naval base. They passed a number of resolutions for harbor

53. The official US Navy itinerary does not list San Diego as a port of call. See US Navy History homepage, <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq42-1.htm#websitesgwf>.

54. The old proverb about "spending money like a drunken sailor" may have been behind this inaction by the city council.

55. "San Diego Is En Fete for Fleet," *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1908; "Program of Events," *San Diego Union*, April 13, 1908.

56. "Battleships Will Arrive Here," *San Diego Union*, March 15, 1908.

improvements, expansion of the coaling station, construction of naval repair facilities, and the permanent stationing of a torpedo-boat flotilla at San Diego. The Chamber sought commercial contacts with Hawai'i and supported Hawai'i's funding request to fortify Pearl Harbor.⁵⁷

In 1908, Chamber records include a request from the California Promotion Committee:

It is important that immediate steps be taken to ascertain what is necessary to be done at Mare Island Naval Yard, California, in order to make San Francisco the great naval base of the Pacific...⁵⁸

This request reminded the Chamber that San Diego had serious competition from California's "first city" for limited naval funds.

PACIFIC INSTABILITIES AND SAN DIEGO-BASED RESPONSE

Local, national, and international events continued to draw America's attention to the Pacific Coast and Asia. California's anti-Japanese legislation further soured relations with Japan. In February 6, 1909, President Roosevelt met with Senators Flint of California and Nixon of Nevada and urged them to bring their strongest influence on their state legislatures to prevent further insults to Japan. In theory, the revival of the Japanese question had nothing to do with the movement of the Great White Fleet. As reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, the "cockiness" of the Japanese during the first crisis (1906-1907) was not dampened by the visit of America's battleship fleet. The author argued that Japan was taking an exasperating course with regard to California's legislative racism. The journalist concluded that American diplomats would be more comfortable addressing these issues when the battleship fleet had a stronger presence in the Pacific.⁵⁹ Instead of battleships, California received torpedo boats. In February 1910, San Diego was selected as the headquarters of the Pacific torpedo-boat flotilla.⁶⁰

In 1910, civil disorder in Mexico and recurring problems with President Porfirio Díaz in 1911 threatened American economic

57. SDRCOC, vol. 2, 1908.

58. SDRCOC, Letter from J.O. Harron, dated October 2, 1908, vol. 2.

59. "Apparent Scare over Jap Controversy: Strong Fleet for Pacific," *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1909.

60. "North Island Place Chosen [for] Torpedo Boats' Headquarters at San Diego," *Los Angeles Times*, February 10, 1910.

interests in Mexico and security along the common border. As unrest in Mexico and Central America mounted, San Diego became the *de facto* advance naval base for American cruisers operating off the Pacific coast of Mexico and Central and South America. The Navy's war plans for Latin America during the period 1911–1918 counted on a concentration of the Pacific squadron's cruisers at San Diego in order to effectively project American military presence along the coasts of Mexico or Central America.⁶¹

The first of these peace enforcement operations occurred in March 1911. A provisional regiment of Marines, consisting of twelve officers and 503 enlisted men, was assembled in San Diego from the Marine barracks at Mare Island and Puget Sound Naval Yards. On March 20, 1911, the regiment arrived at San Diego and established a camp on North Island. Tensions eased between the United States and Mexico before the Marines could cross the international border. The provisional regiment was disbanded, and the Marines returned to their home stations in June and July 1911.⁶²

The first serious challenge to American military and political policy in the Pacific was not from Mexican or Central American revolutionaries but from Japan. If America held the Hawaiian Islands and prevented a foreign imperial power from establishing control of any port in Latin America, then the California coast, the Panama Canal, and the maritime trade in the eastern Pacific would be safe from interdiction by rampaging, coal-burning cruiser squadrons. (See Map 1.) It is therefore not surprising that some leaders in Washington took a Japanese attempt to establish a lease of Magdalena Bay in Baja California, Mexico, as a hostile act.

In 1910, President José de la Cruz Porfirio Díaz of Mexico, worried about Mexican discontent with his pro-American policies, attempted to improve Mexican-Japanese relations. In December 1910, a Japanese Navy training squadron was entertained at the port of Santa Cruz. Shortly after the Japanese squadron's visit, Díaz's son visited Japan. A Japanese newspaper reported that a defensive alliance between

61. "Pacific Fleet Is Ready," *New York Times*, March 14, 1916.

62. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Mark J. Denger, "A Brief History of the U.S. Marine Corps in San Diego," California State Military Department, The California State Military Museum. <http://www.militarymuseum.org/SDMarines.html>; Elmore A. Champie, *Brief History Of Marine Corps Base And Recruit Depot San Diego, California* (Washington DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division Headquarters Marine Corps, 1962), 1–3.

Japan and Mexico aimed at the United States and granting Japan permission to establish a naval base at Magdalena Bay was being negotiated.⁶³ In early 1911, the Díaz government cancelled the US Navy's lease of Magdalena Bay. It was suggested at the time by the local American consuls of Manzanillo and Salina Cruz that Mexico intended to lease the bay to Japan. After the overthrow of the Díaz government in May 1911, the Madero administration seemed ready to pursue the matter with Japan, if the United States would permit it.⁶⁴

While these international events were unfolding, John Blackman, a Los Angeles businessman, was attempting to sell his company's interest in the bay. He was approached by a group of Japanese from San Francisco offering to buy 2,000 acres, provided they could get fishing concessions from a third party. Knowing that dealing with the Japanese for Magdalena Bay would result in a public outcry, Blackman devised a complicated stock deal and had his attorney, Frederick H. Allen, explain it to the State Department. The American government sat on the deal until the end of 1911. Due to the government's delay, Blackman decided to go forward with the transaction.⁶⁵

In January 1912, Blackman took a group of interested investors on a tour of Magdalena Bay. This group included Japanese engineers.⁶⁶ As Blackman continued to pursue the deal, William Randolph Hearst got wind of the transaction. He informed the State Department of Blackman's activities, and in late January 1912, the State Department ordered Blackman to stop all transactions.⁶⁷ On February 29, 1912, Senator Lodge used the incident in a speech against treaties President Taft was attempting to get ratified.⁶⁸

Hearst had come into possession of some incriminating documents and published a series of articles in April 1912 which revealed

63. In April 1911, US Ambassador to Mexico Henry Lane was reported to have had a photograph of the Treaty, but President Taft insisted the treaty was a myth and the photograph never materialized. Eugene Keith Chamberlin, "The Japanese Scare at Magdalena Bay," *Pacific Historical Review* 24, no. 4 (November 1955), 345-359, 349. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3635319>, accessed March 1, 2012, 18-59.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid., 350.

66. It is not clear whether these were Japanese Americans or Japanese Nationals. Chamberlin, 350-351.

67. Chamberlin, 351.

68. Ibid., 354.

plans for establishing a Japanese colony at Magdalena Bay accompanied by thousands of troops.⁶⁹ Suspicious of Hearst's "yellow peril" articles, the *New York Times* cabled the Japanese government, which categorically denied any interest in a settlement at Magdalena Bay.⁷⁰

In late March or early April 1912, the American government informed Japan that the proposed commercial venture was unacceptable. Japan already had a coaling station at Punta Arenas near the Straits of Magellan, but her commercial need was recognized. Ships rounding the Cape often exhausted their supply of coal, and the military value of that location was nil. At the Magdalena site, there was no commercial value as the land was unproductive, and Mazatlán, 200 miles away, was an established coaling site. However, from the military point of view, Magdalena had many advantages. Its location would have permitted the Japanese government, through the steamship company negotiating for the lease, to establish wharves and fortifications without attracting attention. The commercial port could easily be converted to a naval base in time of war.⁷¹

The Japanese government started denying these allegations as soon as Hearst began publishing his articles. As an example, T. Miyaoka, a Japanese capitalist, publicly denied the Japanese were attempting to establish a naval coaling station at Magdalena Bay. He declared that Japan deplored sensational press and propaganda. He asserted that the Japanese were merely negotiating fishing rights and that the Toyo Kisen Kaisha Company needed to acquire property to store coal for civilian steam ships.⁷² Historian Eugene Keith Chamberlin considered the 1912 incident at Magdalena Bay another William Randolph Hearst invention and exaggeration to keep the "yellow peril" issue alive.⁷³

In all probability Chamberlin is correct, yet at the time the Magdalena Bay controversy reinforced the pro-Navy argument for a stronger naval presence on the Pacific Coast on the basis of a Japanese threat to Pacific shipping and the soon-to-be-operational Panama Canal. Journalists at the time saw it as a legitimate threat. In his

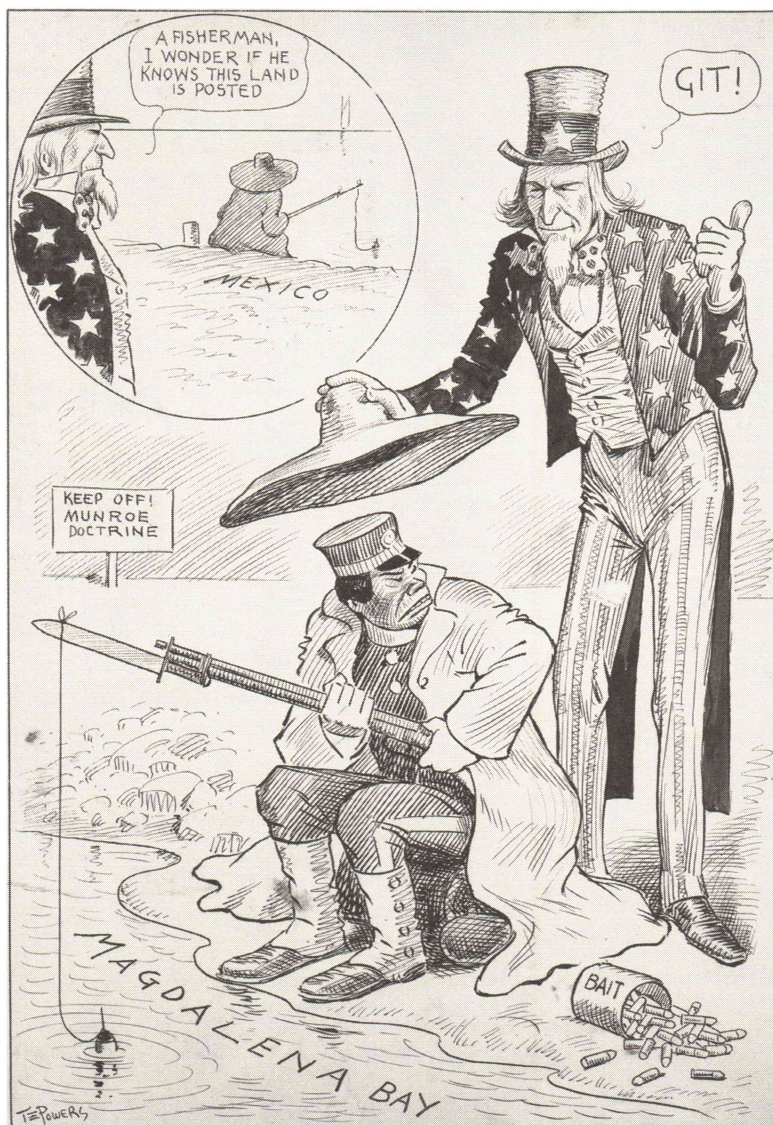
69. Ibid., 354-355.

70. Ibid., 355.

71. "Warning to Japan on Magdalena Bay," *New York Times*, April 5, 1912.

72. "Denies Japan Seeks Mexican Naval Base," *New York Times*, May 5, 1912.

73. Chamberlin, 355-357.



In this 1912 political cartoon by T. E. Powers, Uncle Sam discovers Japanese fishing interests in Magdalena Bay, Mexico, to be a cloak for military motives, and orders them out, citing the "Munroe" Doctrine. *Caroline and Erwin Swann collection of caricatures and cartoons, Library of Congress (LC-USZ62-85448).*

1912 article "The Orient and World Peace," author Basanta Koomar Roy wrote that "the Yellow Peril is a stern reality." Roy warned that "the Mexican concession of 2,000,000 acres on Magdalena Bay threatened to be a Japanese Philippines . . ." ⁷⁴ The *Los Angeles Times*

74. Basanta Koomar Roy, "The Orient and World Peace," *The Open Court* (1912), 620–635.

summarized the train of events: "The site could only be valuable for military purposes, and that would make its acquisition a hostile move by Japan."⁷⁵

Mexico's instability and Japan's imperialism were not the only problems challenging American economic and military policy in Central America. Unrest in western Nicaragua posed problems for American military planners in 1912 and Washington decided upon military intervention. The majority of American warships and marines were based on the East Coast of the United States. To insert a marine landing force into western Nicaragua prior to the completion of the Panama Canal, the Navy had three options. The first option was to sail warships around South America to the west coast of Nicaragua. The second option was to sail the landing force to the east coast of Panama, have the Marines cross the Isthmus by rail and then board a Pacific warship for the final leg to western Nicaragua. Third, the Marines could have traveled via transcontinental rail to San Francisco and then boarded a warship and sailed to the west coast of Nicaragua. The naval planners selected option two. It was the simplest and quickest course of action despite its apparent complexity. A naval base at San Diego was key to supporting this strategy. On August 24, 1912, a provisional regiment of Marines, consisting of twenty-nine officers and 752 men, under command of Colonel Joseph H. Pendleton (1860-1942), sailed from Philadelphia for service in western Nicaragua. Four days later on August 28, 1912, the USS *California*, operating from San Diego, formed an expeditionary force from its crew and sent it ashore on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua to protect American lives and property.⁷⁶ Pendleton's Marines landed in the Canal Zone and made their way to the city of Balboa on the Pacific Coast. There they embarked on the USS *California*. On September 1, 1912, the USS *California* sailed back to Nicaragua and landed the marines on September 4, 1912. With Pendleton's Marines on shore, the peacekeeping mission was transferred to them, and the USS *California*'s landing party returned to ship.⁷⁷

75. "Magdalena Bay's Importance," *Los Angeles Times*, September 4, 1912.

76. The landing party consisted of 350 sailors and Marines under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Steele.

77. Report dated September 4, 1929, Location: Balboa, Canal Zone, From: Commander Special Service Squadron, To: Director of Naval Intelligence, Subject: Expeditions formed and landings effected by

Meanwhile, the revolutionary situation in Mexico remained unstable and endangered American lives and property. On September 4, 1913, Admiral Cowles, commander of the Pacific Squadron, ordered the USS *Buffalo* to proceed to Ciaris Estero, Mexico, with the objective of evacuating all Americans and foreigners from the Yaqui Valley. A landing party of Marines and sailors accompanied American Consul R.W. Vail to escort twelve Americans and eighty-three others from the Richardson Construction Company back to the USS *Buffalo*. The ship reached San Diego on September 14, 1913.⁷⁸

CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM KETTNER

The Magdalena Bay incident, unrest in Central America, and the ongoing revolution in Mexico—and the fact that San Diego was the logistic hub for Navy and Marine expeditionary operations for these theaters—provide the context of the election of Congressman William Kettner. Kettner, a Democrat, had been an insurance executive before his election to Congress.⁷⁹ He was one of the few Democrats ever elected to represent San Diego at the national level. As a businessman he had an intimate relationship with the Chamber and understood what was required to achieve the Chamber's objectives. During his service as San Diego's congressman, he was in constant communication with the Chamber and provided a continuous stream of progress reports.⁸⁰

Before assuming his congressional seat, Kettner traveled to Washington, DC, to pursue harbor appropriations for dredging San Diego Bay. He was aware that in order to secure the Secretary of the Navy's support, he had to first obtain the support of Admiral Dewey. His first two visits to Dewey failed to result in a letter of support. Kettner spent an evening at the Army and Navy Club where he interacted with a number of senior naval officers who encouraged him to visit Dewey a third time. The third meeting with Dewey won Kettner a letter of support:

U.S. Naval Forces in Central America, Mexico, and West Indies from 1901 to May 1, 1929. http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/haiti_list_exp.htm#1911.

78. Captain Harry Allanson Ellsworth, USMC, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines, 1800-1934* (Marine Corps Historical Division, 1934, Reprinted by U.S. Marine Corps: Washington DC, 1974), 115.

79. Letter dated November 11, 1912, from William Kettner to J.D. Phelan. William Kettner Papers, MS29 File 4/1, San Diego History Center.

80. SDRCOC, vols. 1912-1920.



Congressman William Kettner, 1915. *San Diego History Center* (8173).

The geographical situation of San Diego, 450 miles south of San Francisco, close to the Mexican border, and the nearest United States port to Panama on the Pacific coast points to its being a frequent port of call... The General Board believes it probable that naval use of the port will increase... There is room in the inner harbor for at least 16 capital ships... [and] it is desirable that a depth of 35 feet over the middle ground and 40 feet over the bar be provided...⁸¹

The letter did not furnish unqualified support of San Diego as a naval base, but it was sufficient to convince the Secretary of the Navy and other congressmen to sponsor a House bill adding an appropriation of \$249,000 for dredging the mouth of San Diego's harbor.⁸² After twelve years of lobbying, the Chamber and San Diego had a representative who could implement their vision. By the end of his first term Kettner was able to procure for San Diego \$249,000 to dredge the harbor, \$95,000 to expand the naval coaling and fuel oil station, \$335,000 to upgrade the coast defenses (adding two twelve-inch mortar batteries) and \$300,000 to establish a naval radio station in San Diego.⁸³

81. Ibid.

82. Kettner, *Why It Was Done and How*, 12-15.

83. Ibid., 40-45.

MEXICO, THE MILITARY, AND THE
PANAMA-CALIFORNIA EXPOSITION

In 1914 the situation in Mexico deteriorated, and Washington decided again on military intervention. The Pacific Squadron was massed at San Diego under the command of Admiral Thomas B. Howard in order to initiate operations off Mexico's Pacific coast. Two hundred sixty Marines from Puget Sound Naval Yard and 600 Marines from Mare Island Naval Yard were transported to San Diego and formed into the 4th Provisional Marine Regiment under Colonel Pendleton.⁸⁴ Eighteen cruisers, destroyers, auxiliaries, and transports were involved in the operations.⁸⁵ This event was the largest military activity in San Diego since the visit of the Great White Fleet in 1908, but it was a minor sideshow of the full operation. The main theaters were the Texas border and the Caribbean.⁸⁶ As part of this operation, the 4th Provisional Marine Regiment sailed aboard the USS *South Dakota*, USS *West Virginia*, and transport USS *Jupiter* as a show of force to the Gulf of California. When stability returned, this naval task force returned to San Diego harbor on July 6, 1914, and the 4th Provisional Marine Regiment established an encampment at Camp Howard on North Island.⁸⁷

With the completion of the Panama Canal in August 1914, San Diego and San Francisco both planned expositions. San Francisco opened the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and San Diego the Panama-California Exposition. The 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition was an important event for the development of San Diego as it resulted in national recognition. When Kettner took office in 1912, San Diego was so little-known it was listed as "Santiago" in the Congressional Directory. Kettner believed this exposition would put San Diego on the map. He was involved in securing federal funding for the event and the attendance of congressmen, senators, cabinet members, and foreign dignitaries.⁸⁸

84. After his previous action in Nicaragua, Pendleton had returned to Portsmouth. On September 13, 1913, he had been given command of the Marine Barracks at Naval Base Puget Sound, Washington.

85. "Pacific Warships Order to Mexico," *New York Times*, April 16, 1914.

86. "20,000 Troops and Two Naval Divisions Massed to Mobilize near Mexican Border," *New York Times*, March 8, 1911.

87. Denger, "A Brief History of the U.S. Marine Corps in San Diego."

88. Kettner, 36-39.

To support the California expositions, Major General George Barnett (1859–1930), Commandant of the Marine Corps, ordered the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines to support the San Francisco event and the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines to support the San Diego event. Both battalions established model barracks and other Marine exhibits. In San Diego, Pendleton established a Marine barracks in Balboa Park, which is today the Science and Education Building in Balboa Park. The Marines would remain in Balboa Park until the Marine base at Dutch Flats was constructed in 1921.⁸⁹ (See Map 2.)

On September 16, 1914, at a banquet at the Grand Hotel in San Diego celebrating the rechristening of the USS *California* to USS *San Diego*, Pendleton gave a speech entitled “San Diego as a Marine Advance Base.”⁹⁰ At the time of the speech, the presence of the Marines in San Diego was temporary and dependent upon the Mexican situation.⁹¹ Pendleton urged Headquarters Marine Corps to establish an Advance Marine Base at San Diego.⁹² Twelve miles north of the Mexican border, San Diego was the southernmost harbor on the American Pacific coast. San Diego was the logical location from which to protect the Pacific shipping lanes and the Panama Canal’s western approach (see Map 1) and could serve as a port of embarkation for other military operations in South and Central America and Asia.

In February 1915, Pendleton approached Kettner and, over dinner, broached the subject of a Marine Advance Base.⁹³ Kettner guided the Colonel from his original proposal for a base at North Island to one at Dutch Flats. When General Barnett visited the exposition, he toured the site and added his support to the project.⁹⁴ Initially, Barnett had opposed establishing a Marine base in San Diego. During his congressional testimony on December 17, 1914,

89. Denger, “A Brief History of the U.S. Marine Corps in San Diego.”

90. Martin K. Gordon, ed., *Joseph Henry Pendleton 1860–1942, Register of His Personal Papers* (Washington, DC: History And Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1975), “San Diego as a Marine Advance Base,” speech delivered by Colonel Pendleton on 16 September 1914 at a banquet at the U.S. Grant Hotel, San Diego, 46 (hereafter Pendleton Papers).

91. Pendleton Papers, 51, Memorandum dated 29 September 1914 from Maj. Gen. Cmdt. George Barnett to Col. Joseph H. Pendleton, 47.

92. Pendleton Papers, Memorandums and Letters from 16 September 1914 to 8 September 1915, 46–53.

93. The exact date of this conversation is not clear. Based upon the Pendleton’s Papers, it was in February or March 1915.

94. Kettner, 52–54.



In 1915–1916, San Diego hosted the lavish Panama-California Exposition to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal and to draw attention to San Diego's expected boom in trans-isthmian trade. The fair's elaborate exhibit buildings, such as the Varied Industries Building here, remain today as the core of Balboa Park. Tinted postcard, "San Diego Panama-California Exposition, Official View." Published by the Panama-California Exposition, 1915. Courtesy of the San Diego History Center (GM460).

Barnett had called for locating the Pacific Coast Marine base in San Francisco because it was a major population center for recruiting and supplies. After his visit to the exposition, Barnett again testified before Congress on August 14, 1915. Based upon his trip to San Diego his recommendation had changed. Barnett concluded that San Diego had better climatic conditions than San Francisco and more civic support.⁹⁵ On December 6, 1915, Kettner sent a letter to Pendleton indicating support for the proposal.⁹⁶

During the exposition, two events very publicly demonstrated the value of establishing a permanent Marine Expeditionary Base in San Diego. In June 1915, indigenous Mexicans raided American property, threatening American citizens in the Yaqui Valley (located inland from the coastal city of Guaymas), Mexico. On June 17, 1915, Pendleton led three companies of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines from

95. Ibid., 55.

96. Pendleton Papers, letter dated 6 December 1915 from Congressman William Kettner to Colonel Pendleton, Folder 12, 54.

Balboa Park and embarked on the USS *Colorado* sailing for Guaymas. When Mexican authorities stabilized the situation at the end of July 1915, the USS *Colorado* and Colonel Pendleton's Marines returned to San Diego.⁹⁷ Winning even more publicity, in August 1915 Colonel Pendleton's Marines defended the Coronado Country Club's beach from a mock attack by sailors from the USS *Colorado*.⁹⁸

Another visitor to San Diego's Panama-California Exposition was then-Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Delano Roosevelt (hereafter FDR). While there he toured Dutch Flats. FDR was favorably impressed and supported the proposal for the Marine base.⁹⁹ Kettner submitted a bill in 1916 authorizing the purchase of 232 acres for \$250,000. The City of San Diego donated an additional 500 acres of tidal flats, which were accepted by the Navy in 1917.¹⁰⁰ Due to dredging and fill requirements, construction of permanent buildings was not commenced until 1919. The Marines moved from Balboa Park into their new Dutch Flats installation on December 21, 1921, and dubbed it Marine Advanced Expeditionary Base, San Diego.¹⁰¹ In August 1923, the Marine Recruit Depot relocated from Mare Island Naval Shipyard to the new San Diego Marine Base.¹⁰²

Thereafter, FDR and Kettner discussed the objective of relocating the Naval Training Station from San Francisco to San Diego. FDR had visited Goat Island Naval training facility in Oakland and had found it to be an unhealthy environment. FDR informed Kettner that he would support the relocation of the facility to San Diego. In response, the Chamber raised \$290,000 to buy a site on Point Loma for the naval training facility. Key to this transaction was the Chamber's ability to rally support from the city's leading citizens. Kettner was thus able to offer the Navy \$300,000 in land and other incentives

97. Report dated 4 September 1929, Location: Balboa, Canal Zone, From: Commander Special Service Squadron, To: Director of Naval Intelligence, Subject: Expeditions formed and landings effected by U.S. Naval Forces in Central America, Mexico, and West Indies from 1901 to 1 May 1929. http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/haiti_list_exp.htm#1911.

98. "Battle Lines at San Diego," *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 1915.

99. Denger.

100. Kettner, 52–59.

101. Denger.

102. National Archives and Records Administration, National Archives at Riverside (here after NARANAR), Record Grp. 181, 11th Naval Dist., Box 32, Folders 1500–1, 1500–5 Memorandum Dated August 1, 1923, from Commanding General Hq. 5th Brigade to Commanding General Pacific, Subj: Transfer of Recruit Depot.

to relocate the naval training facility to San Diego. Construction at the Point Loma site started in 1921, and in 1923 the U.S. Navy Training Station, San Diego, was commissioned.¹⁰³

SAN DIEGO, NAVAL PORT

The increased naval activities due to the unrest in Latin America and World War I underscored the need for augmenting naval shore support facilities in San Diego. Between 1900 and 1912, the Chamber had waged an aggressive campaign to establish the coaling station as a fully functioning facility. The Navy's efforts to improve the station between 1912 and 1918 were assisted by the Chamber's lobbying efforts with federal representatives and officials. By the end of World War I the depot had evolved into a fully functioning fuel facility.¹⁰⁴ During World War I, the Chamber and San Diego's civic leaders accommodated the Navy's need for training facilities by turning over all of Balboa Park to the Navy once the exposition closed down in March 1917. All the park buildings were converted into a wartime training center for new sailors, marines, and naval aviators. Within a year the Chamber of Commerce proposed offering the Navy Department tracts of bay-front property at no cost with the proviso that the property be used to build naval installations in the future. San Diego's voters overwhelmingly approved a ballot proposition to this effect. San Diego's civic culture, as well as the Chamber's primary focus, was forging strong ties with the Navy. These installations would be constructed in the 1920s.¹⁰⁵ This partnership between San Diego and the Navy was a matter of civic pride and became a prominent theme in the Chamber's advertisements aimed at attracting tourists and residents.¹⁰⁶

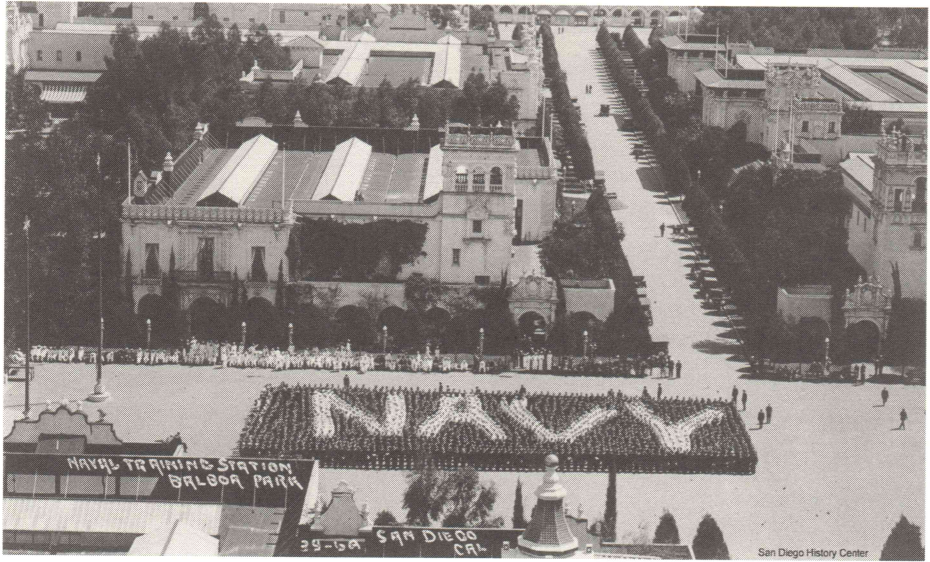
In 1923, the city of Oakland realized that it had been undercut and sent the federal government a letter of protest. The response from California Senator Samuel M. Shortridge admonished the northern city:

103. Molly McClain, "'Liberty Station' and the Naval Training Center in San Diego," *The Journal of San Diego History* 54, no. 2 (Spring 2008), 74.

104. Martin, "San Diego Chamber of Commerce," 229.

105. Abraham J. Shragge, "I like the Cut of Your Jib," *The Journal of San Diego History* 48, no. 3 (Summer 2002), 51-119.

106. Ibid.



After the Panama-California Exposition closed in March 1917, Balboa Park, with all of its exposition buildings, was turned over to the Navy as a wartime training center for sailors, marines, and naval aviators. Here, World War I recruits line up in “NAVY” formation at Balboa Park Training Center, 1917. *San Diego History Center* (PCH 84-107).

It was in 1919 . . . that Congress first made the appropriation providing for the removal of the training station [from the San Francisco Bay area] to San Diego. Since that time \$2,000,000 has been appropriated and spent at San Diego for the training station alone . . . [I]f some of the protest had been made more timely, it is reasonable to assume that some of this activity might have been saved for Northern California.¹⁰⁷

The success of the Chamber and Kettner was summarized in the Chamber Board President’s Annual Report for the fiscal year ending October 31, 1919. The report indicates that naval activities operating in San Diego in 1919 or budgeted for 1920–1924 included North Island Naval Air Station, Marine Base San Diego, Marine Railroad, Coaling Station, Fuel Oil Storage, Naval Base San Diego, Naval Training School, Concrete Ship Plant, Naval Radio Station Point Loma, Balboa Naval Hospital, and the Naval Repair Station. It was the home port of Squadron 4 and 5 of the Pacific Fleet, the 108th Torpedo Boat Destroyer Flotilla, naval support ships, and Naval Aircraft detachments. The Army was represented by improved gun batteries at Fort Rosecrans, the Air Service Flying School at Rockwell

¹⁰⁷. Kettner, 62–63.

Field (North Island), and Camp Kearny, where the 40th Infantry Division (California Army National Guard) trained before being shipped to France in World War I.¹⁰⁸ The Marine Corps Recruit Depot would be transferred to San Diego in 1923.¹⁰⁹

The increased permanent naval presence in San Diego and the unrest in Mexico and Central America required a reorganization of the Pacific Coast naval command structure. On October 26, 1917, the 12th Naval District created a southern headquarters in San Diego.¹¹⁰ In 1920, half of the nation's battleships were transferred from the Atlantic and stationed permanently in the Pacific. San Diego is six hundred miles south of San Francisco, and the time required for routine communication between the headquarters, although immediate correspondence could be transmitted by telegraph, was one of the considerations that led to the relocation of the 11th Naval District (a regional headquarters) to San Diego, which was assigned the administrative responsibility for all of southern California in 1920.¹¹¹ With the transfer of the 11th Naval District to San Diego, the foundation of America's Guardian of the Pacific was complete.

CONCLUSION

In the early 1900s, while Washington and Admiral Dewey were focused on the German threat, other civilian and military political editorialists and visionaries foresaw that the United States and Japan would sooner or later become primary antagonists for domination of the Pacific.¹¹² During the "Great Game" of imperialism, neutral nations would send warships to observe incidents in order to look

108. SDRCOC, Annual Report dated October 31, 1919, Vol. 1919.

109. NARANAR, Records Group 181, 11th Naval District, Box 32, Folder 1500-1 and 1500-5, memorandum dated August 1, 1923, Commanding General Headquarters 5th Marine Brigade to Commanding General Department of the Pacific, Subject: Transfer of the Recruit Depot.

110. Ibid.

111. NARANAR, Records Group 181, 11th Naval District Folder 400-16 and 400-16A, Memorandum For Secretary of the Navy, July 19, 1920; Fifty Years of Naval District Development 1903-1953, Department of the Navy, Naval History Center, http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/navy_dist.htm#cn42. The memo read, in part, "At present all matters involving questions of policy must be referred for decision to the Commandant of the 12th Naval District at San Francisco, some 600 miles away. It usually takes six to eight days for a letter to be written and a reply therefrom. Questions, which require prompt decision, must be transmitted by telegraph at considerable expense to the Government."

112. Ronald Spector, *Admiral of the New Empire; Life and Career of George Dewey* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 137-153, 161.

after the rights of their citizens and their commercial interests. Their presence would gain them a voice in the negotiated peace, with the possibility of acquiring additional colonial possessions or interests. What charged this equation with extra meaning in the Manila Bay episode was the fact that, of those with ships on the scene, only Japan and America were Pacific powers. To maintain its new imperial status in the Pacific, the United States would have to develop its supporting Pacific possessions in Japan's backyard. Local officials in California did not understand that anti-Japanese-immigration legislation would antagonize Imperial Japan. Japan had established a track record of attacking powers that interfered with its imperial ambitions; it had already defeated the only other powers located on the Pacific Rim, China and Russia. Washington, in the wake of the Japanese government's reaction to an anti-Japanese resolution by the San Francisco school board in 1906, finally understood the threat. Japan's reaction made it clear that the real threat to the United States was Japanese imperialism, not Japanese immigration. Despite defeating China and Russia, Japan felt she was not accepted as an equal to America and the European powers. The San Francisco school board's action was an insult to Japan's national pride and a very dangerous course of action for the United States.¹¹³ In the spirit of Mahan, Japan, along with Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, was in a naval arms race for dominance of the Pacific.¹¹⁴ These political events were the impetus for President Theodore Roosevelt's decision to send the Great White Fleet on its world cruise. The "show the flag" cruise, while successful as a public relations stunt, was a failure militarily. In 1907 America had twenty-four battleships, and Japan had twelve. By 1914 the United States had increased to thirty-one with five more under construction. Japan had sixteen with four under construction.¹¹⁵ This military superiority was irrelevant without naval support facilities. The lack of a Pacific fleet with naval bases on the Pacific Coast and in Asia demonstrated to the world generally and to Japan in particular that America could not realistically project its naval power into the western Pacific in a timely manner.

113. Paul S. Dull, *A Battle History of The Imperial Japanese Navy (1941-1945)* (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1978), 3-4.

114. Ibid.

115. During World War II, aircraft carriers would replace battleships as the dominant warship for control of the world's oceans.

Since 1900, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce's vision of urban development coincided with America's rise from a regional power focused upon the Atlantic and Caribbean to a world power focused on the Pacific. The Chamber realized that development of an American world-class navy required the nation to support the development of ports with naval bases on the sparsely settled Pacific Coast. Despite the Chamber's focused lobbying efforts between 1900 and 1912, it met with only limited success until the election of Congressman Kettner. He brought business networking skills to the Chamber's lobbying efforts. Together they developed a campaign plan that included incentives that reduced the cost of developing Navy and Marine facilities in San Diego. The utility of San Diego as a provisional base for naval peace enforcement operations in response to unrest in Mexico and Central America between 1911 and 1920, evidence of Japanese interest in Mexico, and the publicity provided by the Panama California Exposition of 1915–1916 convinced Washington's political and military leadership of the advantages of San Diego as a primary Navy and Marine base. Finally, the willingness of San Diego's civic leaders to donate land to the Navy, before and after 1920, was a significant incentive to establish naval shore installations in San Diego.¹¹⁶ Together, San Diego's natural advantages, civic leaders and voters, Congressman Kettner, and strategic considerations spurred by events in Mexico, Central America, and Asia led to the development of San Diego as the home port of the Pacific Fleet.

116. NARANAR, Records Group 181, 11th Naval District, Box 36, Folder 3900–20, petition dated 27 July 1922; Memorandum from Judge Advocate General to Commandant, 11th Naval District, dated 16 May 1922; Memorandum from Cmdt. 11th Naval District to Secretary of the Navy, dated 13 April 1922, and letters dated 21 January 1920 and 10 September 1921.



Knott's Berry Farm, 1963. An employee dressed in Native American attire, outside the blacksmith shop in the theme park's Ghost Town section. Beside him, a stand holds other Indian headdresses for guests to wear when having their photo taken with the "Indian chief." Photo by Roy Hankey. *Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library Historic Photo Collection (LAPL00068612).*

THE HISTORIAN'S EYE:

What does a historian notice in a photo from the past?

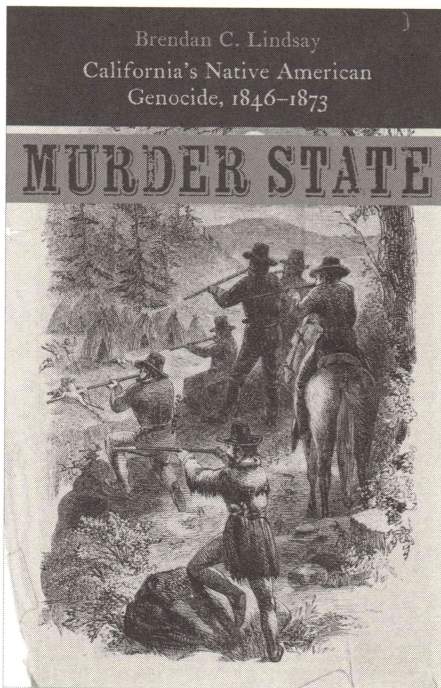
A man dressed as a Native American stands in front of an “Old West” blacksmith shop at the Knott’s Berry Farm theme park, next to a stand holding feather headdresses for visitors to don for photo ops with the “Indian chief.” Why would visitors want to pose with and as Indians in 1963? And why would an “Old West” theme park in California choose to depict a Plains Indian rather than California’s own Native American peoples as the “authentic” Indian? Some scholars have suggested that the Indian horsemen on the Great Plains could be depicted in dime novels and motion pictures as worthy adversaries whose deaths could be read as justifiable or tragic, whereas killing horseless, sedentary Native Americans violated literary traditions. Did visitors identify with the Indians’ tragic losses when they posed for their pictures, or were they posing in the spirit of fun or even mockery?

In the 1940s Walter Knott began transforming a berry stand and chicken restaurant into an amusement park by creating a replica ghost town. Some of the structures came from Calico, a real mining ghost town in San Bernardino County, which he had acquired. A stage coach and covered wagon, “gold mine,” staged “shoot-outs,” saloon performers, and the “Indian” were added attractions. Orange County has its own history, and neighboring Los Angeles County even has the violence and “bad guys” that popular culture seems to relish, yet the theme park chose to celebrate a fictionalized history of another “Old West.” Perhaps it is easier to construct a fantasy past in which life seemed less complicated, more spontaneous, and more certain of a happy ending if unencumbered by specific reminders of a historically accurate but messier, less satisfying past in the form of local landmarks and street signs bearing the names of local historical figures. We can learn from history, but we have often embraced escapism in our entertainment.

BOOK REVIEWS

MURDER STATE: *California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873*. By Brendan C. Lindsay. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2012. 456 pp. \$70.00 cloth.) Reviewed by David Miller.

In 1848 there were approximately 150,000 Native Americans living in California. By 1860 that number had dropped 80% to 35,000. Forty years later only 15,000



remained (128). Mention of this fact in the undergraduate classroom (or at a dinner party) will invariably raise many questions and objections. Most instructors, this one included, can probably relate to the problem of explaining to undergraduates how such a tragic history could have occurred. How, exactly, *did* 90% of California's Native American population die in 50 years? With Brendan Lindsay's "Murder State," instructors, researchers, and lay audiences now have an explanation. But the explanation Lindsay provides is a troubling history of the relationship between a culture of white supremacy, the democratic process, and a popular will to profit from the land.

Lindsay explains in detail how different actions on the part of white settlers decimated the Native American population in the first decades of statehood. He

shows how a range of actions surrounding the desire to acquire, use, and hold land, from the seemingly benign (ranching, grazing, logging) to the outright violent (kidnapping, militias, massacre), dramatically reduced the population in a relatively short period of time. This information, while important to his argument, is not completely new to historians. What Lindsay brings to the table are the theories of genocide studies and the legacy of California's democratic process. Lindsay's burden

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is not to show that these deaths occurred, but to explore why and how they could happen. His genocide framework serves this purpose well, allowing him to explain the psychological mindset that made such an event possible. These contributions to the historiography are also the potentially unsettling aspects of Lindsay's work.

The term "genocide" conjures powerful images and equally powerful skepticism. Was the decline of a Native American population in California really "genocide"? According to the United Nations own definition, it is. Lindsay explains that accepted standards of genocide include the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group" (15) and demonstrates that in California white settlers did just that, utilizing at least four of the five methods identified by the U.N. He shows how white settlers already had a mindset of the "core values" of genocide that made their actions in California possible (68). A long-standing culture of hatred and fear of Native Americans traveled west with settlers in the imagination as well as in popular emigrant guides. His examination of John C. Fremont's reports, for example, is especially illustrative in this regard. What this means for scholars is that we have a new framework in which to understand the history of California, one that ties it to other global histories of genocide. While his theoretical contribution is groundbreaking for the history of California's Native American population, his methodology is more traditional. Yet the results are anything but ordinary.

The second troubling aspect of Lindsay's argument is his conclusion regarding the place of democracy in this process. He considers the way "the organs of government and the popular press responded to the wishes of white Americans" (27). He concludes that, taken as a whole, the historical record provides overwhelming evidence that "the acts of local, regional and state governments in California show them to be complicit in the genocide of Native American peoples" (28). In short, these were not rogue vigilantes, wild cards acting outside the purview of law and order. Rather they were citizens using the democratic process. They called on California's governors to raise militias supported by the state treasury and often reimbursed by the federal government (to the tune of millions of dollars in the 1850s alone) (27). Without using physical violence, the legislatures passed property and tort laws that benefited whites. And the courts upheld the rights of the white citizenry against those of Native Americans.

Of course, Native Americans did not lie down passively as their destruction unfolded. Unfortunately, more often than not, their response only exacerbated the violence. Lindsay shows that, disposed of land, pushed to the margins, and with few options remaining, a Native American response of violence or theft often reinforced the savage stereotype and/or exacerbated the fear whites already held. Either way, the response was a call for more violence against Native Americans who soon found themselves targeted by a local militia or brought to court where they had no rights and little chance of justice. With the levers of the legal system solidly in the hands of whites, Native American resistance was criminal and resulted in punishment, again executed under the auspices of the democratic process. Out gunned and with no legal recourse, Native Americans succumbed or fought back to their own detriment.

Lindsay's argument is important for at least two related reasons. First, it gives voice to an historical silence for both scholars and lay audiences. The consequences of white settlement on California Indians have been covered in detail. Sherburne Cook and Jack Forbes were the first to argue that the killing of indigenous peoples was not the work of a few whites, but rather an extension of the popular will. In 1977 William Coffey was the first historian to apply the term genocide to these events, while Jack Norton fleshed out those ideas two years later. Lindsay builds on that theory of genocide and adds something new: the centrality of democracy.

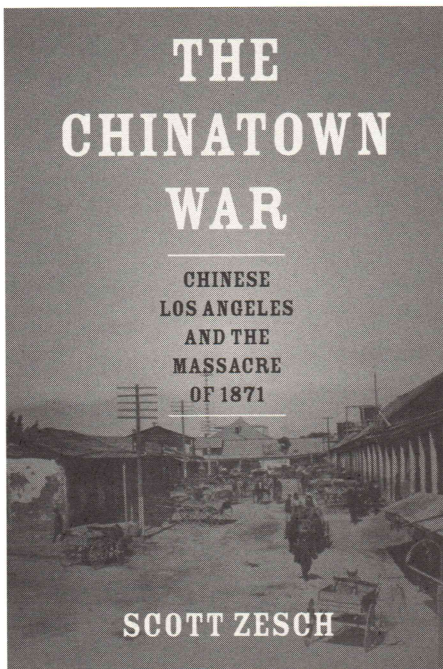
Second, Lindsay's conclusions do more than fill a void; they have profound consequences for how we think about the nature of democracy both now and in the past. One might look to Edmund Morgan's work on freedom and slavery for a similarly arresting thesis: what we often think of as being completely incompatible, or at the very least an ugly contradiction, were in fact related processes. Morgan argued in "American Slavery: American Freedom" that slavery took root in early Virginia not in contradiction to notions of democracy but as a foundational characteristic of a particular expression of American freedom. Similarly, Lindsay is suggesting that genocide happened within the very mechanisms of civil society and the apparatus of democratic institutions. In California, few of the white electorate would have seen a contradiction. Rather their notion of freedom demanded that the democratic system do exactly what it did – aid them in eliminating Native Americans from the land and in securing it for their prosperity. California genocide was California freedom.

Why does this matter? Because if it is true, and Lindsay makes a persuasive case that it is, then we as Americans may do well to rethink some of our basic assumptions about the meaning of freedom and our democratic processes, both in the past and now. At the very least, one is pushed to wonder what atrocity might be occurring under the aegis of democracy and freedom right now in the United States. What are we doing about it, and will it require 150 years before anyone recognizes it?

David Miller teaches United States history at the University of San Diego, offering courses on the Civil War and Reconstruction as well as the history of race and ethnicity.

THE CHINATOWN WAR: *Chinese Los Angeles and the Massacre of 1871*. By Scott Zesch. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 272 pp. \$29.95 cloth.) Reviewed by Hellen S. Lee.

Analyses of Chinese migration to the United States during the mid-nineteenth century often focus on the port of San Francisco. Scott Zesch's *The Chinatown War*, however, directs our attention roughly 500 miles south to Los Angeles, a small frontier town in 1871 of only about twenty streets and roughly 5,700 inhabitants (with under 200 Chinese immigrants). Filled with myriad details and novelistic recreations of dialogue, Zesch's text recounts and dissects the little-known massacre of eighteen Chinese immigrants in Los Angeles that year.



With astute attention to racial and ethnic diversity among the many origins of immigrant populations—European, Latino, Californio, Asian, and Black—Zesch tells of an undeniably cosmopolitan Los Angeles on whose streets “one could hear English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Chinese spoken” (82). Zesch pays close attention to the developing Chinese presence, including the various social and economic organizations (*huigans* and *tongs*); the roles women played socially, economically, and legally; and the ethnic and racial tensions brewing in the city and throughout the state.

By using individuals’ names, professions, and other personal details gathered through newspaper and magazine accounts, court documents, census reports, and scholarship, Zesch brings to

life how the Chinese made their way economically, socially, and legally through the earliest years of settlement on Calle de los Negros (currently the southeastern corner of El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument). According Zesch, the Chinese in Los Angeles were not docile outcasts who were excluded from the civic fabric of the town. Instead, they were prominent entrepreneurs, key parts of industry and labor, and active participants in the court system for redress against injustices from whites and each other (19).

In the lead-up to his analysis of the massacre, which took place on October 24, 1871, Zesch discusses rampant violence in a way that highlights the Wild West character of the burgeoning town. For instance, from 1850 to 1851, Los Angeles had a homicide rate of 12.4 per 1,000 residents, “the highest ever in American history” (24), and it had seen an increase in random acts of violence in the late 1860s. Zesch shows how the massacre was set off by a series of attacks and counterattacks within the Chinese community that were sparked by Yo Hing, “Chinatown’s most affable rogue and also its most sinister troublemaker” (108). When a dispute over an abducted Chinese bride resulted in gun violence between two Chinese factions, Robert Thompson, a white rancher and saloonkeeper who joined in the gunfire to capture or kill the Chinese shooters, was killed. In response to Thompson’s death, Zesch reports that the city marshal and the sheriff, who were soon joined by a mob fueled by rumors of other white deaths, began stalking, surrounding, and shooting Chinese men and women in acts of retaliatory violence. The bracing hour-by-hour account of the massacre and trials that followed unfolds in rich detail.

Zesch importantly complicates many typical explanations for racial violence, such as job competition and high unemployment rates, by showing how Los

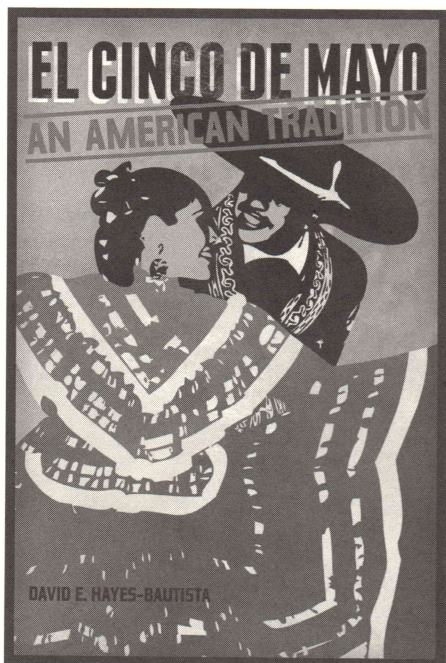
Angeles was not on the decline; rather, it was enjoying a period of economic and demographic growth. Zesch instead points to largely race-based hatred and places much of the blame on the media—such as the *Los Angeles News* for its “anti-Chinese animosity” and “hatemongering” (95)—and on the shoulders of the white civic leaders of the town for “[helping to] create an atmosphere in which the mob could carry out its crimes” (173).

A *tour de force* of research and historiography, Zesch’s book brings attention to a brutal moment in California history and aptly considers the social, economic, political, and legal conditions for racial and ethnic violence without excluding all participants from culpability.

Hellen S. Lee is associate professor of United States multi-ethnic literatures in the English department at California State University, Sacramento. Her teaching and research examines literary representations of racialized immigrant and working women in the late nineteenth-century US.

EL CINCO DE MAYO: An American Tradition. By David E. Hayes-Bautista. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012. 302 pp. \$26.95 paper.) Reviewed by Amy Jin Johnson.

As a young man, David E. Hayes-Bautista found himself in Guadalajara on May 5, or Cinco de Mayo. After rushing to the city’s center, eager to join what he anticipated to be a vibrant celebration, he waited for hours for the festivities to begin. When the streets remained quiet, even after night had fallen, he returned home disappointed, wondering how a holiday so widely celebrated by Latino com-



munities in California and across the United States had no cognate in Mexico. Hayes-Bautista’s extensive research into this question led to *El Cinco de Mayo*, a highly readable and important analysis not only of the holiday’s origins but also of the native-born and immigrant Latino communities that created it.

Widely misunderstood to be Mexican Independence Day or a transported Mexican holiday, Cinco de Mayo actually commemorates the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, when the significantly disadvantaged Mexican army defeated the French at the first battle of the French intervention. Challenging not only this misunderstanding but also earlier scholarship on the holiday, Hayes-Bautista concludes that Cinco de Mayo was created by native-born and immigrant Latinos

in California as an exercise of their agency and a narrative of the social construction of their own identity and culture as Latinos living in the United States during the tumultuous mid-nineteenth century (4).

Hayes-Bautista begins by linking the American Civil War to the French intervention in Mexico, arguing that as both countries encountered threats to their sovereignty and democratic rule, Latinos in the western states were left to grapple with issues of language, identity, citizenship, and political participation. The shift in control of California from Mexico to the United States in 1848 and the large number of immigrants from across the western hemisphere flooding into California during the gold rush contributed to a burgeoning and diverse Latino population. While these groups shared some similarities of language and culture, they were still largely divided along racial, socioeconomic, and national lines. They did, however, share “the situation of being considered undesirable strangers in a society to which they did not belong and did not want them” (24). According to the author, it was this common bond that drew these disparate Latino communities together.

Facing discrimination from Atlantic American whites, the Latino communities formed *juntas patrióticas mejicanas*, or Mexican patriotic assemblies, devoted to supporting their growing constituencies and increasing political participation. Employing his background as a demographer, Hayes-Bautista read the activities of these grassroots organizations as a new data source for understanding and analyzing the Latino communities during this period. While the *juntas* had existed before 1862, the author found that they gained significant momentum following the Battle of Puebla, discovering a *poder convocatorio*, or summoning power, not only in their work as benevolent societies but also in pragmatic civic actions such as naturalization and voter registration efforts (178).

It was in this context that the *juntas* organized the inaugural celebrations of what would become Cinco de Mayo. As Latinos witnessed U.S. President Abraham Lincoln and Mexican President Benito Juárez struggling to protect their newly formed democracies from the threats of state secession (Lincoln) and the reinstatement of imperial rule (Juárez), they marked the victory over the French on May 5 as a reassertion of Mexico’s status as a democratic nation. Invoking the memory of this victory over the French to rally the Latino communities in the United States, they constructed “a motivational and unifying public memory around the unexpected victory of the forces of freedom and democracy” (131).

The dual patriotism of these early celebrations was short-lived. According to Hayes-Bautista, as those who had witnessed or knew of Cinco de Mayo’s origins passed away and the leadership of the *juntas* changed hands, the public memory of the holiday underwent an extensive evolution, and its original intentions became blurry. In the final chapter, the author traces the holiday from 1868 to 2011, noting that as more recent Latino immigrants began to take charge of organizing the yearly festivities, the holiday has become increasingly divorced from its original message. He concludes that as the importance and influence of Latino communities has grown, particularly over the last three decades, the holiday has been adopted and adapted by political and commercial entities that have exploited the holiday’s appeal for their own purposes.

Unfortunately, this interpretation of the holiday after the Civil War era is rather limited. In his introduction, Hayes-Bautista states that he intends to explore how public memory has shaped and reflected the evolution of Latino identity in the United States, but with the first five chapters focusing on the years between the Mexican-American War and the beginning of Reconstruction, his analysis of Cinco de Mayo as an American tradition falls short. His final chapter attempts to discuss the shifting meanings of the holiday from 1868 to 2011, a bold endeavor, but one that feels rushed and somewhat incomplete. With the majority of the text exploring the origins of Cinco de Mayo, his stated intention of unpacking the evolving public memory of the holiday becomes secondary.

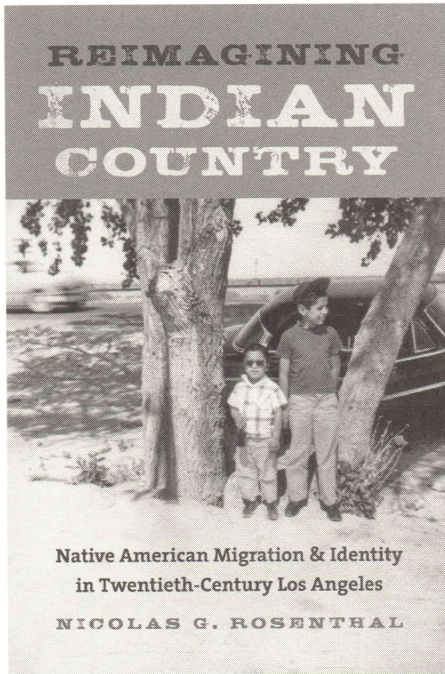
That being said, Hayes-Bautista draws from a wealth of interdisciplinary sources, including census records, demographic studies, and nineteenth-century Spanish-language newspapers. While he recognizes both the biases and the limitations of these sources, he elegantly places them in conversation with previously studied secondary and English-language materials. Reading Cinco de Mayo as “a genuine American holiday, spontaneously created during the Civil War by ordinary Latinos living in California,” the author encourages a rebranding of the holiday that returns to its original message of dual patriotism (190). He concludes that the holiday encouraged not only the celebration of these multiple identities but also a deep sense of pride for the shared democratic ideals upon which both countries were founded.

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REIMAGINING INDIAN COUNTRY: *Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*. By Nicolas G. Rosenthal. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. 256 pp. \$39.95 cloth.) Reviewed by Kevin Whalen.

Indigenous Americans are often imagined as rural peoples. Indians, the story goes, are supposed to live on reservations. Those who venture into cities are portrayed as exceptions to the seemingly ironclad rule. This, of course, is far from the truth, as Native Americans who live at least part time in cities have outnumbered their reservation-based counterparts for nearly half a century. In *Reimagining Indian Country*, historian Nicolas Rosenthal pushes readers beyond reservation-bound conceptualizations of American Indians. Native peoples, Rosenthal argues, have long reimagined Indian country to encompass urban areas. The rest of us—scholars and others—need to catch up.

Reimagining Indian Country begins by exploring the lives of Indians in early twentieth-century Los Angeles. Here, Rosenthal dives into a chronically understudied area within Native American history. While pioneering studies from historians Nancy Shoemaker and Kurt Peters provided glimpses into urban Native America during the first three decades of the twentieth century, historians have tilled little new ground on this topic in recent years. Rosenthal deftly combines information from federal and California census rolls, Office of Indian Affairs agency files, and newsletters from federal Indian boarding schools to create brief



biographical sketches of indigenous Angelenos. Together, these vignettes provide a larger picture of a significant body of Native American activists and wage laborers in Los Angeles during the early twentieth century. Scholars of Indian education will note fascinating connections between the Sherman Institute, a federal Indian boarding school in Riverside, California, and urban Indians in Los Angeles. Sherman students, Rosenthal argues, used the school's training and job placement programs in order to secure jobs and housing in the city, especially around World War II.

Rosenthal follows his exploration of early twentieth-century Native American Los Angeles with a look at the experiences of indigenous people in Hollywood. Michelle Raheja and others have provided critical analysis of performances

by indigenous actors during the first half of the twentieth century. Rosenthal buttresses this work by building nuts-and-bolts narratives of lived experience among Native American thespians. Despite often-oppressive working conditions, Native Americans used jobs in the film industry to survive in the city. Alongside alumni of federal Indian boarding schools, actors such as Richard Davis Thunderbird became early leaders in Native American Los Angeles.

In the last half of *Reimagining Indian Country*, Rosenthal delves into the more thoroughly studied themes of federal relocation and Native American activism during the second half of the twentieth century. These chapters make extensive and remarkable use of oral histories, as Rosenthal melds together archival interview transcripts, personal interviews, and more traditional historical sources such as newspaper articles and pamphlets from American Indian organizations. Two arguments are especially important. First, Indians in Los Angeles slowly but steadily gained control over institutions originally established and operated by white "friends of the Indian," including the Los Angeles Indian Center. And, just as importantly, Native Americans exerted increasing control over federal Indian relocation programs, first winning access to lists of new arrivals in order to help them adjust to life in the city, and then securing federal grants in order to provide services to newly relocated Indians. Native American activists, educators, and social workers helped to make Los Angeles a leading center in the push for political self-determination during the 1960s and 1970s.

If Rosenthal's historical sketches of Native Americans in Los Angeles are fascinating, so too are the broader theoretical implications of his work. The author boldly casts aside the spatial boundaries shared by most studies of indigenous

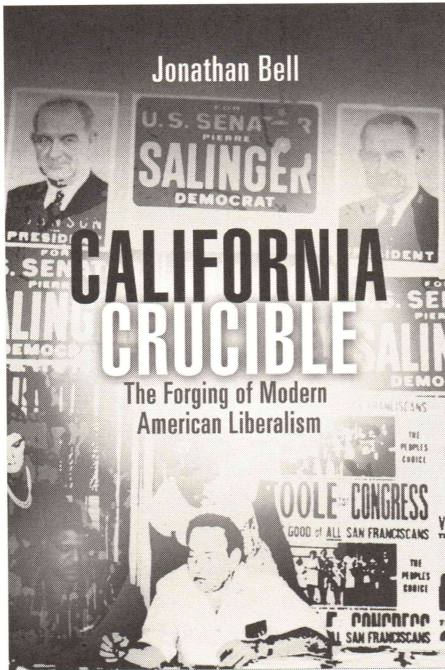
peoples of the early twentieth century. To be sure, *Reimagining Indian Country* is a place-based study—the book is every bit as centered on Los Angeles as the title suggests. Yet, Rosenthal clearly demonstrates Native American Los Angeles was never a hermetically sealed destination for Indians. Rather, Native Americans used the city as an urban hub. There, they gained access to work, education, and intertribal networks of urban Indians. Some stayed, some returned home to reservations, and some did both. Some climbed rapidly into the middle class neighborhoods of Pasadena and Santa Monica, while others developed strong roots in the working class enclaves of Bell Gardens and Torrance. In the end, the author takes questions regarding wage labor and modernity, first raised by historians Colleen O'Neill and Brian Hosmer, among others, and links them with broader discussions on migration and urbanity. Like many strong ethnohistories, *Reimagining Indian Country* makes a convincing claim that Native American history is integrally connected with the swirls and eddies of broader American history. As such, Rosenthal's work will appeal to a wide audience. Alongside Native Americanists, scholars working on the urban United States, immigration, and indigenous education will find it useful.

A comprehensive, century-long history of indigenous people in a city as sprawling and complex as Los Angeles is a difficult task, and *Reimagining Indian Country* raises as many questions as it answers. The book's many smaller narratives may leave some with a desire for deeper, more textured stories. For example, what did neighborhoods that played host to Native Angelenos look and feel like? Relatively small questions like these do not reflect upon theoretical or methodological shortcomings, but rather the vast topical void into which *Reimagining Indian Country* plunges. Rosenthal fulfills the promise of his title, as he provocatively calls for scholars and others to recognize what Native Americans have long known: cities, too, are Indian country. The author has laid a strong foundation for an ambitious project within the field of Native American history. One can only hope that many more such projects will follow.

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CALIFORNIA CRUCIBLE: *The Forging of Modern American Liberalism*. By Jonathan Bell. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. 352 pp. \$47.50 cloth). Reviewed by Leonard J. Moore.

For more than a decade, historians of modern American conservatism have made postwar California their laboratory. With its dynamic economy driven by a huge expansion across a wide range of industries; by massive government investment in defense, aerospace, electronics, housing, transportation, and education; and by a vast, diverse influx of opportunity-seeking migrants, California came to epitomize America's postwar golden era and the conservative political uprising that seemed to grow so organically inside it. Major works have described the mobilization and emerging power of conservative evangelicals, the role of middle-class women in forging a respectable, maternalist conservatism, and the hotbed of



support for anticommunism, traditional religious values, limited government, and Barry Goldwater in Orange County. Other studies have offered important insights into the politics of race, ethnicity, and class that launched the suburban rebellion against fair housing, racial unrest, and student protest in the 1960s; the transformative political career of Ronald Reagan, the eventual “taxpayer’s revolt,” and Proposition 13; as well as continuing conflicts over immigration, gay rights, unions, fiscal crises and other issues.¹

Jonathan Bell’s *California Crucible* also depicts California as a bellwether of postwar politics, but from the other side of the political spectrum. Beginning with left-wing activists of the forties and fifties who brought together support for a pro-labor, civil rights agenda at the very

moment when aggressive pro-business, anti-government Republicans were repudiating a generation of moderate Republican rule led by Earl Warren, Bell shows how California liberals built a formidable base of support for a politics of social and economic citizenship by the mid-1960s. At the center of the story is the governorship Edmund G. Brown Sr., who, between 1959 and 1967, presided over an unprecedented era of state government expansion, standing up for unions and farm workers, attacking discrimination in employment and housing, enacting an extraordinarily successful “master plan” for public education, creating health care programs for the poor and aged that would help set the stage for Medicare and Medicaid, and furthering economic growth with huge infrastructure projects, among other accomplishments.

According to Bell, California liberals built a postwar grassroots political movement that was distinct from older, New Deal traditions of the urban East and Midwest that had never taken deep root in the Golden State. Pushed forward by political clubs and a corps of activists with aggressive left-wing leanings, the

1. Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Fold Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: Norton, 2011); Michelle Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Matthew Dallek, *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan’s First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 2000); Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920–1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Stephen J. Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race and Mexican Americans* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

movement helped develop support for a modern liberalism that reflected the demands and conflicts of a prosperous postwar society and on many levels succeeded in fusing traditional concerns over economic inequality with a broader agenda of social reform and cultural transformation. On many levels, Bell challenges the widely accepted notion that modern American liberalism was undone by losing its traditional focus on economic concerns and over-emphasizing divisive civil rights issues and identity politics, while conservatives surged into power as business elites found common ground with right-wing populists eager to do battle in the culture wars. Bell demonstrates that throughout the 1960s, conservative reaction against Berkeley's Free Speech Movement, the rise of the United Farm Workers, the Watts Riots, the fair housing movement, anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, and emerging protests over women's rights, gay rights, and other matters did indeed open the door to a powerful anti-liberal upsurge and the emergence of Ronald Reagan. Bell also recounts in detail how many of these same issues ignited dissent and division within the state's Democratic Party and contributed to the demise of the "liberal moment" of the late 1950s and early 1960s. At the same time, however, he shows that even as the era of liberal dominance in California passed, liberalism itself would remain a vital and competitive force in state politics, sustained by a dedicated coalition of minority and urban voters, notably in the "left coast" cities of San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland, other parts of the Bay Area, and large sections of Los Angeles. Alan Cranston's long career representing California in the U.S. Senate, Bell rightly points out, underscored the continuing power of the liberal vote among ethnic and cultural minorities, in the cities, and even in many suburban areas of the state. Long before the McGovern campaign in 1972, Bell concludes, California had already established the post-New Deal model of modern liberalism based on pluralistic visions of individual freedom and economic justice, visions that in the long run would offer a powerful challenge to America's modern conservatism.

The power of Bell's argument derives from the book's exceptionally rich grounding in the archives of the California Democratic Council, other Democratic clubs, and labor groups, as well as the papers of key Democratic Party figures such as Brown and Cranston, Phil Burton, Willie Brown, Jesse Unruh, and a long list of other activists and leaders. The depth of Bell's research allows him to create an incredibly detailed, nearly blow-by-blow account of the perceptions, strategies, and conflicts within the circles of Democratic leaders and activists as they struggled to gain influence in the immediate postwar years, rode to power in the late 1950s and 1960s, then battled to compete with the new conservative upsurge into the 1970s. On many levels Bell offers a persuasive alternative to any zero-sum conclusion that might be drawn from the important literature on postwar California conservatism – that the political left collapsed in direct proportion to the powerful upsurge that came from the political right. Bell gives us clear insight into the forces that allowed both political traditions to advance together and, quite significantly, helps us better understand why, despite the continued vitality of conservative forces inside the state, California has remained one of the deepest of blue states in national politics over the last two decades. It is worth noting that Bell's analysis lacks the kind of

grounding in social history that has made much of the work on conservatism in this era so convincing. This is very much a history of the state's Democratic Party and its institutional superstructure. One is left wondering, for example, how and under what circumstances liberal causes made inroads into the postwar suburbs, and how middle class affluence may have furthered Democratic Party successes on some levels even as it seemed to drive support for the Republicans at the same time. Bell also pays relatively little attention to environmental issues, which may have played a significant role along these very lines. These observations aside, however, this is an important, original work that should cause scholars of modern liberal and conservative politics to see the postwar era in a significantly different light.

Leonard J. Moore is associate professor of United States history at McGill University.

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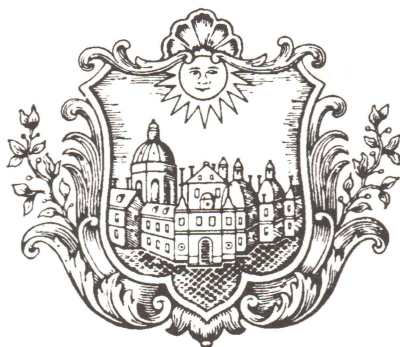


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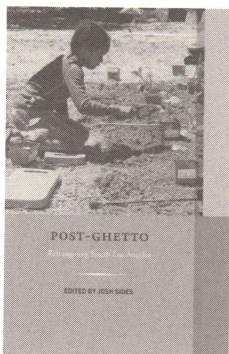
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